



# UNITED STATES POSTAL INSPECTION SERVICE

## NEWS RELEASE

DATE: 5/17/2024

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Three Suspects Arrested for Alleged Mail Theft, Robbery and other Criminal Charges**

**Los Angeles** – Antonio Hernandez, alleged Avenues gang member, was arrested by Postal Inspectors and charged with mail theft, conspiracy to commit bank fraud, bank fraud, aggravated identity theft, and robbery of a Post Office. His co-conspirators, Ivan Murillo-Hernandez, and Alexis Garcia Martinez were also charged with the same crimes.

As alleged in the indictment, since at least November 2022, to about August 2023, these defendants and their juvenile co-conspirators would steal mail from Post Offices across the Los Angeles and Orange County areas, using threats of force and other tactics, with the aim of stealing mail containing checks belonging to various victims. To date, intended victim losses total more than \$800,000.

Among the several post office theft incidents alleged in the indictment, and in furtherance of the conspiracy, on April 4, 2023, after robbing a Post Office in Anaheim of trays of mail, Hernandez, Murillo-Hernandez, and other co-conspirators allegedly fled law enforcement in a vehicle that Garcia Martinez provided. Over the course of that afternoon, the vehicle with Hernandez, Murillo-Hernandez, and other co-conspirators ultimately led police on a high-speed pursuit across multiple local freeways before abandoning the vehicle.

These defendants also allegedly recruited juveniles and other conspirators through social media, by requesting that they provide their debit cards or bank account information to the co-conspirators, promising these account holders a cut of any fraudulent funds deposited into their accounts. To circumvent the fraud protections of the financial institutions, the defendants would specifically request bank accounts that were open long enough to be established so the co-conspirators could get access to the stolen funds quickly. Once the funds were available the defendants would then rapidly deplete the fraudulently deposited funds from the account holders' accounts by making cash withdrawals, electronic transfers, and/or debit card purchases.

"The U.S. Postal Inspection Service is dedicated to defending the nation's mail system from criminal activity, preserving the integrity of the U.S. Mail, and protecting United States Postal Service employees. The Postal Inspection Service would like to thank our law enforcement partners for supporting our mission to protect the integrity of the U.S. Mail," said Carroll N. Harris, Inspector in Charge of the Los Angeles Division of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service.

It is important to note that criminal charges are only allegations against a person. Every defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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