

# Florida man pleads guilty in gas station skimming scheme in Massachusetts

“A Florida man pleaded guilty yesterday in federal court in Boston to his role in a scheme to steal thousands of customers’ debit and credit card account numbers, and other personally identifying information, via a network of electronic skimming equipment at gas stations across New England.

Luis Angel Naranjo Rodriguez, 32, of Hialeah, Fla., pleaded guilty to eight counts of wire fraud, four counts of bank fraud, four counts of aggravated identity theft, one count of possessing 15 or more counterfeit or unauthorized access devices (the debit and credit card account numbers) and one count of possessing device-making equipment (the card skimming devices). U.S. District Court Judge Richard G. Stearns scheduled sentencing for May 11, 2023. Naranjo Rodriguez was arrested and charged in March 2020 and subsequently indicted by a federal grand jury in September 2020.

Naranjo Rodriguez secretly installed card skimming devices in gas pumps in Massachusetts gas stations and in other New England states. The devices were programmed to send Naranjo Rodriguez’s mobile phone a text message with stolen account information after customers had used their debit or credit cards to purchase gas at the compromised fuel pumps. Card skimming devices linked to Naranjo Rodriguez’s mobile phone were traced to at least 11 different gas stations located in Lynnfield, Concord, Malden, Taunton, Randolph and Raynham, Mass.; Portland, Maine; Nashua, N.H.; and Willington, Conn.

Between April 2019 until November 2019, Naranjo Rodriguez traveled frequently from Florida to Massachusetts to maintain

this network of card skimmers. During the course of the scheme, Naranjo Rodriguez's mobile phone received at least 4,878 text messages containing stolen debit and credit card account numbers. Many of these text messages also included the account holders' names and Personal Identification Numbers (PINs).

Naranjo Rodriguez cloned the account information belonging to the unwitting victims onto gift cards and other prepaid cards in order to steal money from them, typically by using the cloned cards to make ATM withdrawals, to purchase consumer goods that could be resold in secondary markets, and to request cash back on debit card transactions. On Nov. 16, 2019, security cameras at a Framingham gas station and CVS captured Naranjo Rodriguez using four cloned cards to withdraw money from victims' bank accounts at ATMs. Naranjo Rodriguez was arrested the same night at the Concord Rotary Gulf gas station, where he was tampering with a fuel pump after the gas station had closed. In Naranjo Rodriguez's car, four cloned cards from the ATM withdrawals earlier that night were found, along with fuel pump keys, black latex gloves, four card skimming devices and the mobile phone that was receiving the text messages with the stolen credit and debit card account numbers.

The charge of aggravated identity theft provides for a mandatory sentence of two years in prison to be served consecutive to any other sentence imposed, up to one year of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000. The charge of bank fraud provides for a sentence of up to 30 years in prison, five years of supervised release and a \$1 million fine. The charge of wire fraud provides for a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, three years of supervised release and a \$250,000 fine. The charge of possessing device-making equipment provides for a sentence of up to 15 years in prison, three years of supervised release and a \$250,000 fine. The charge of possessing 15 or more counterfeit or unauthorized access

devices provides for a sentence of up to 10 years in prison, three years of supervised release and a \$250,000 fine. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and statutes which govern the determination of a sentence in a criminal case.

United States Attorney Rachael S. Rollins and Andrew Murphy, Special Agent in Charge of the United States Secret Service, Boston Field Office made the announcement. Special assistance was provided by the Concord, Lunenburg and Raynham Police Departments in Massachusetts, Nashua (N.H.) Police Department and the Portland (Maine) Police Department. Assistant U.S. Attorney Fred M. Wyshak, III of Rollins' Organized Crime & Gang Unit is prosecuting the case." -Massachusetts Department of Justice.