



**FLORIDA WOMAN FOUND GUILTY IN GAS STATION DEBIT CARD SKIMMING
OPERATION THAT INVOLVED MULTIPLE STATES**

Montgomery, Alabama- Eunises Llorca-Menses (30), of Naples, Florida, was found guilty by a federal jury Friday for her part in a scheme to use skimming devices on gas pumps to steal credit and debit card numbers, announced A. Clark Morris, Acting U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Alabama, and Steven T. Marshall, Attorney General for the State of Alabama. The guilty verdict follows a multi-agency investigation that was initiated by the Ozark Police Department, the Alabama Attorney General's Office, the United States Secret Service, and the Baldwin County Sheriff's Office.

On February 15, 2017, Llorca Menses and her co-defendant Reiner Perez-Rives (34), of Houston, Texas, were charged by a federal grand jury with conspiracy to commit wire fraud, wire fraud, and aggravated identity theft. Perez-Rives pled guilty in July to conspiracy and identity theft charges.

As part of the scheme, Llorca-Menses and Perez-Rives, would rent vehicles and travel between Florida, Alabama, Tennessee and Virginia. During their travels, they would visit several gas stations and install a skimming device inside gas pumps. Through the skimming device, they collected gas station customers' credit/debit card information and used that information to activate or reactivate credit, debit, or gift cards, and make unauthorized ATM cash withdrawals at gas stations and purchases at several places around the Southeast.

Law enforcement was able to uncover this scheme following multiple reports from victims concerning the unauthorized use of their debit cards. Working with financial institutions, the Ozark Police Department, along with state and federal partners, discovered that many of the victims had used their cards at the same gas station in Ozark, Alabama. At this station, they found a skimming device with Bluetooth capability installed on a gas pump. The Bluetooth technology allowed the defendants to collect a gas customer's credit/debit information while sitting up to thirty-feet away from the gas pump.

At the time of their arrest on December 21, 2016, Llorca-Menses and Peres-Rives were found to be in possession of thirty-nine credit/debit cards that had been re-encoded with stolen credit/debit card numbers, along with an additional 317 gift cards. A Wal-Mart gift card that contained the stolen account information from a victim's Capital One credit card and a key used to gain access to the inside of a gas pump was found in Llorca-Menses' purse. Law

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enforcement also found a homemade device with connectors that matched the connections on the skimming device found in the gas pump in Ozark in their luggage.

Llorca-Menses and Perez-Rives each face a maximum sentence of 30 years in prison and payment of restitution to their victims. Their sentencings will take place within the next few months.

"It is incredibly difficult for the average person to determine if a gas pump has a skimmer," stated Acting U.S. Attorney Morris. "This is because many are placed inside the gas pump with no visible evidence of tampering. While the crooks may be getting smarter, law enforcement continues to work hard to stay a step ahead. This conviction shows that our office will continue to work with our partners to identify criminals that seek to victimize our citizens."

"This conviction should send a strong message to debit card skimmers seeking to target unsuspecting Alabamians: you will be caught and brought to justice," said Attorney General Marshall. "Special thanks to agents of the Alabama Attorney General's Office, the U.S. Secret Service, the Ozark Police Department and the Baldwin County Sheriff's Office for their teamwork in quickly uncovering this multi-state electronic crime spree and capturing the criminals, and to the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Alabama for this successful prosecution."

"I would like to thank all law enforcement partners who brought these criminals to justice," stated Ozark Police Chief Marlos Walker. "This is a win for all our communities as well as the men and women who stand up for justice every day. Teamwork is essential to the very being of a law enforcement professional. The Ozark Police Department was happy to do our part and will continue the fight against crime and disorder."

Resident Agent in Charge Clayton Slay, with the United States Secret Service Montgomery Resident Office, stated, "the Secret Service has established an aggressive, coordinated and proactive effort to investigate and prosecute financial crimes with local and state law enforcement partners and the U.S. Attorney's Office. Through this effort, Mrs. Llorca-Menses was successfully prosecuted and found guilty by a jury of her peers." RAC Slay also stated that he "would like to personally thank the Ozark Police Department, Baldwin County Sheriff's Department and the Alabama Attorney General's Office for their work and assistance in this case."

To avoid becoming a victim of this type of fraud, customers should pay inside the store or use pumps that are visible to store employees and video surveillance cameras. Criminals commonly target pumps that allow them to install skimming devices undetected. Unfortunately, it is impossible to prevent all types of fraudulent charges from taking place. This is why early detection is so important. Citizens are encouraged to monitor their bank and credit card accounts frequently and immediately report any unusual activity to their financial institution.

This case was a joint investigation involving the Ozark Police Department, the Alabama Attorney General's Office, the United States Secret Service, and the Baldwin County Sheriff's Office. Assistant United States Attorney Denise O. Simpson and Assistant United States Attorney Steven Lee prosecuted this case.