



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **13 Defendants, Many Linked to Local Street Gangs, Charged with Credit Card Skimming and Narcotics Trafficking**

*LOS ANGELES* – Thirteen people, most of whom are linked to La Mirada- and Norwalk-based street gangs, have been charged in federal court in a bank fraud scheme involving “skimmed” credit cards, and in narcotics cases, one of which alleges a transaction involving over three kilograms of methamphetamine.

Authorities this morning arrested 11 of the defendants, the lead defendant in the credit card fraud case was arrested late this afternoon, and law enforcement continues to search for one more defendant who remains at large.

The credit card skimming operation was allegedly operated by a man linked to a criminal street gangs known as the La Mirada Punks and the Carmelas. Russell Jay Ogden, along with his wife, are accused of leading the scheme that allegedly skimmed credit cards – meaning victims’ credit cards were surreptitiously run through an electronic device that collected the cards’ information. Members of the scheme then encoded the stolen information on counterfeit credit cards and used the fraudulent cards to purchase big ticket items that were later sold for a profit. The investigation has determined that many of the credit cards in this case were skimmed at a restaurant in Huntington Beach.

In total, the conspiracy compromised more than 500 credit cards and caused various financial institutions to suffer losses of more than \$500,000 after the cards were used across Southern California at department stores such as Nordstrom and Bloomingdales, sporting goods stores and Toys R Us, according to the bank fraud indictment unsealed today.

Those charged in the 27-count bank fraud indictment are:

- Russell Jay Ogden, also known as “Big Dog,” 43, of La Mirada, who was taken into custody late this afternoon and is expected to be arraigned tomorrow;
- Rudy Leo Aguilar, also known as “Fats” and “Dreamer,” 32, of Norwalk, who was previously convicted of voluntary manslaughter in a gang-related incident and was sentenced to 13 years in state prison;

- Blaine Andrew Porlas, 51, of La Habra, who is linked to the Nazi Low Riders;
- Marco Anthony Alday III, 26, of Whittier;
- Milan Vukelich, also known as “Bo,” 37, of Artesia;
- Shelly Anne Ogden, who is Russell Ogden’s wife, 41, of La Mirada;
- Leo Norman Aguilar, 32, of Norwalk;
- Ameer Adnan Yousef, 32, of La Mirada;
- Shawn Phillip Vasquez, 49, of Hesperia; and
- Lloyd Luis Leyh, 43, of Huntington Beach, who was sentenced to 13 years in state prison in an attempted murder case involving a firearm, and who is currently a fugitive in this case.

Many of these defendants are members of the La Mirada Punks and the Norwalk-based Carmelas criminal street gangs, and most of the defendants have felony records, it was disclosed in court this afternoon.

Each defendant is charged with conspiracy to commit bank fraud, a charge that carries a statutory maximum sentence of 30 years in federal prison. Most of the defendants are also charged in other counts of credit card fraud and aggravated identity theft.

Rudy Leo Aguilar is also named in a separate indictment that charges him with distributing nearly two pounds of methamphetamine.

Two additional defendants are charged in another narcotics-trafficking case involving methamphetamine. They are:

- Gustavo Uribe Meza, also known as “Big Boy” and “Goose,” 24, of Whittier; and
- Peter Chiapparine, also known as “Uncle Pete,” 72, of South Gate.

The final defendant arrested in the takedown is charged in an indictment that accuses him of trafficking approximately 3.6 kilograms of methamphetamine and federal firearms violations. He is:

- Norman Aguilar Jr., also known as “Flea,” who is Leo Aguilar’s brother, 35, of Norwalk.

In court this afternoon, the 11 defendants arrested this morning entered not guilty pleas and were ordered to stand trial on July 18. Prosecutors said that searches conducted today revealed evidence that the credit card scheme was ongoing.

*An indictment contains allegations that a defendant has committed a crime. Every defendant is presumed to be innocent until and unless proven guilty in court.*

The investigation into the Ogdens and their associates is being conducted by a Task Force that includes the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Huntington Beach Police Department, the Brea Police Department and the United States Secret Service.

These cases are being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Lana Morton-Owens and Saurish Bhattacharjee of the Violent and Organized Crime Section.