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**DIVISION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE NEWS**



NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF LAW & PUBLIC SAFETY

**Anne Milgram, Attorney General**

**Division of Criminal Justice**  
**Gregory A. Paw, Director**

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**For Further Information Contact:**  
Peter Aseltine, AG's Office (609) 292-4791  
Tom Vincz, Treasury (609) 633-6565

**THREE INDICTED FOR ALLEGEDLY CONSPIRING TO STEAL \$828,000  
FROM STATE OF NEW JERSEY BY FILING FRAUDULENT TAX RETURNS**

TRENTON – Attorney General Anne Milgram and Criminal Justice Director Gregory A. Paw announced that three people were indicted today for allegedly conspiring to steal \$828,000 by filing hundreds of fraudulent state tax returns.

According to Director Paw, the following individuals were indicted by a state grand jury on a charge of first-degree conspiracy:

- § Rosa Victoria Rivera, a.k.a. Vicky Rocsana Rivera-Peralta, 40, of Second Avenue, Lyndhurst;
- § Rivera's former boyfriend, John Arturo Perez Silva, a.k.a., John Perez, 39, of Cleveland Street, Belleville, with whom she has three children; and
- § Rivera's son, Wilson Armondo Pinos Rivera, a.k.a. Wilson Pinos, 21, who lived with her in Lyndhurst.

Rosa Rivera also was charged in the three-count indictment with first-degree money laundering and second-degree theft by deception. The first-degree charges carry a maximum sentence of 20 years in state prison and a \$500,000 criminal fine, while the second-degree charge carries a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison and a \$150,000 fine. The indictment resulted from a joint investigation by the Division of Taxation and the Division of Criminal Justice.

“These three individuals allegedly stole more than \$800,000 before investigators put a halt to one of the biggest tax refund scams in state history,” said Attorney General Milgram. “Fortunately, auditors in the Division of Taxation, working with investigators in the Division of Criminal Justice, were able to identify common elements of false information in hundreds of tax returns, which they traced to the defendants.”

“This is an example of our efforts to be vigilant when it comes to enforcing our tax laws,” said Cheryl Fulmer, acting assistant director of the Division of Taxation. “We will continue to do all that we can to ensure that taxpayers file appropriately and that refunds are delivered only to those who legitimately are entitled to receive them.”

An audit by the Division of Taxation identified 540 fraudulent tax returns for which refund checks were issued between Feb. 6, 2004 and July 11, 2006. The returns contained similar taxpayer information, such as similar names, common addresses and common employers. About 400 of the returns were filed electronically and the remainder were filed with paper.

A majority of the refund checks were mailed to mail box drops leased by either Rivera, Perez or Pinos. Of the 540 refund checks, 276 checks, totaling \$828,272 were deposited in bank accounts maintained by Rivera or Perez, which the defendants allegedly used to pay personal expenses. The indictment alleges that more than \$500,000 in checks were deposited by Rivera into accounts she maintained. The Division of Taxation was able to stop payment on the remaining 264 checks, totaling \$1,005,030.

The three defendants were arrested on theft charges on Dec. 19, 2006. On that date, investigators from the Division of Criminal Justice and the New Jersey Division of Taxation, assisted by officers from the Lyndhurst Police Department, executed a search warrant at Rivera's apartment and seized, among other things, a computer, stacks of tax returns, blank W-2s, blank Social Security cards, numerous driver's licenses, passports, bank records and \$191,000 in cash. Several bank accounts of the defendants containing a smaller amount of money were seized, and a second search warrant was executed at a self-storage site leased by the defendants in Belleville, where additional records were confiscated.

The three defendants remain in the Mercer County Jail, Rivera in lieu of \$1 million bail, and Perez and Pinos in lieu of \$750,000 bail each. They will be ordered to appear for an arraignment on the charges in the indictment in Superior Court in Mercer County at a later date.

"The repetitive nature of this scam proved the defendants' undoing, as alleged in this indictment, providing a trail of false tax returns that investigators diligently followed," said Director Paw.

The indictment was handed up to Superior Court Judge Linda R. Feinberg in Mercer County. The charges in the indictment are merely accusations and the defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

The investigation was led by Auditor Thaedra Chebra of the Division of Taxation - Office of Criminal Investigation and State Investigator Noelle Holl of the Division of Criminal Justice - Major Financial Crimes Bureau. The case was presented to the grand jury by Deputy Attorney General Denise Grugan of the Division of Criminal Justice - Major Crimes Bureau.

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