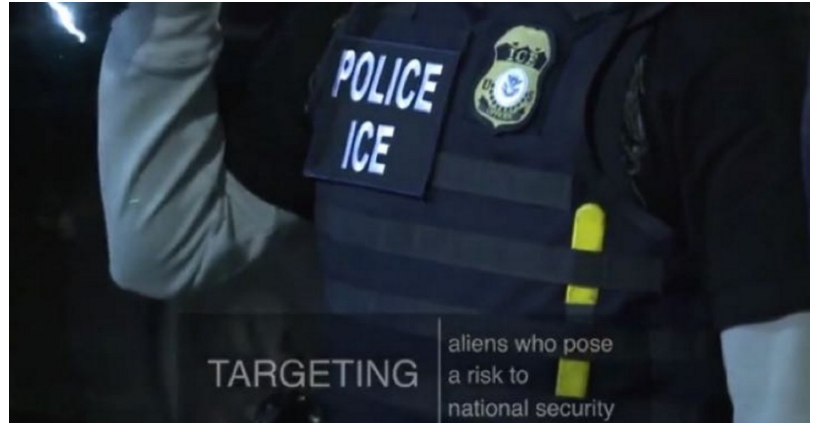




Written by [Warren Mass](#) on March 5, 2018

Mexican Illegal Alien Used Identity Theft to Steal \$360,908 in Government Benefits

The U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of California issued a news release on March 1 stating that a Mexican national who first entered the United States illegally 37 years ago — and who had been deported at least twice — pleaded guilty to theft charges in federal court on March 1. The defendant, Andres Avelino Anduaga of Tijuana, Mexico, admitted during a hearing before U.S. Magistrate Judge Andrew Schopler that he assumed the identity of an American citizen back in 1980 by using the victim's birth certificate to apply for a Social Security number and later, for disability benefits in his victim's name.



Anduaga admitted that during the period from 1989 until 2016, he received almost a quarter-million dollars in Supplemental Security Income benefits, and over a hundred thousand dollars in health benefits, all in the name of his victim.

Anduaga also admitted during the hearing, in which a plea agreement was reached, that in a 2015 interview with federal agents, he falsely claimed to be living in the United States — a requirement for an individual receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits — when in fact he was living in Tijuana, Mexico.

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Anduaga also admitted to illegally seeking benefits from the California Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education program (SNAP, previously known as food stamps) from San Diego County by impersonating the same victim. He eventually fraudulently received more than \$12,000 in additional government benefits this way.

As a part of his plea agreement, Anduaga admitted that he is not a U.S. citizen and that he had been deported from the United States on at least two prior occasions under yet another name. He told the court that despite his deportations, he was able to travel freely between the United States and Mexico using the U.S. passport that he had applied for in the name of his victim. By using the same birth certificate and fraudulently obtained Social Security number, he defrauded the government for decades.

"The programs that this defendant stole from for decades — provide benefits to America's most needy," the release quoted U.S. Attorney Adam Braverman as saying. "This prosecution demonstrates the commitment of the United States Attorney's Office to protecting the integrity of our welfare programs and punishing those who prey on the goodwill of our nation and its taxpayers."

The release also quoted U.S. Border Patrol spokesman Michael Scappechio, who said: "Criminal cases in the border region oftentimes have an immigration nexus. In the spirit of law enforcement



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collaboration, the U.S. Border Patrol supports local, state and other federal partners in the prosecution of people who violate our nation's immigration laws."

As a part of his plea agreement, Anduaga agreed to pay full restitution to the Social Security Administration, the California Department of Health Care Services, and the County of San Diego for the \$360,908.85 in government benefits that he fraudulently obtained by his crimes. He faces up to 12 years in federal prison and a fine of up to \$971,817.70. His penalty will be determined at his sentencing before U.S. District Judge John Houston on May 29, 2018.

Anduaga was not the only illegal alien charged with using identity theft while engaged in criminal activity recently. The Logansport, Indiana, *Pharos-Tribune* reported on February 13 that an alien from Guatemala, Manuel Orrego-Savala, who was charged on February 6 in Marion County, Indiana with two counts of failure to remain at the scene of an accident and two counts of causing death when operating a motor vehicle with a blood alcohol content of .15 or more. The collision resulted in the death of Indianapolis Colts linebacker Edwin Jackson and his Uber driver.

The *Pharos-Tribune* reported that in addition to the original charges filed after the accident, Orrego-Savala now faces additional charges and was charged on February 13 with three level-six felonies of perjury, forgery, and identity deception, and one misdemeanor count of false informing. The charges stem from Orrego-Savala's Boone County arrest a year ago for driving without ever receiving a license. In that case, he gave an alias to Boone County authorities, claiming his name was Alex Cabrera Gonsales. He presented a fake Mexican ID card with that name to the police and used the same name when he went before Boone Circuit Court Judge Jeffery Edens, the affidavit noted.

In the court documents filed on February 13, Boone County Sheriff's Deputy Thomas Beard noted that the Boone County investigation uncovered that Orrego-Savala had been using three aliases. By using an alias, Orrego-Savala escaped a harsher punishment and possible deportation after his March 2017 charge. Beard's probable-cause affidavit details that Orrego-Savala has twice been deported and was not supposed to be in the United States in March 2017, nor on February 4 when the fatal crash occurred.

Orrego-Savala was also charged at the federal level, as the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Indiana charged him with the crime of illegal re-entry into the United States by a previously deported alien.

Image: Screenshot [from ice.gov](#)

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