



Department of Justice

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District of Oregon

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FORMER POSTAL WORKER SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR STEALING OVER 400 MOBILE PHONES OUT OF PACKAGES IN THE MAIL

PORTLAND, Ore.—A former U.S. Postal Service employee was sentenced to federal prison today for stealing mobile phones out of packages at the Portland postal sorting facility, announced U.S. Attorney Billy J. Williams.

Rico Alvarez, 24, was sentenced to one year and one day in federal prison and three years' supervised release.

"It is imperative that the community has confidence and trust in the integrity of the U.S. Postal Service" said United States Attorney Billy J. Williams "Thanks to the dedicated efforts of the U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General, this defendant is held to account for violating that trust."

U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General, Western Area Field Office, Executive Special Agent-in-Charge John D. Masters said, "The U.S. Postal Service has a long and proud history dating back to 1775. The Postal Service employs over 630,000 men and woman who are dedicated public servants. For over two centuries, the Postal Service has honored its fundamental commitment to protect the sanctity of the U.S. Mail. Mr. Rico Alvarez willfully chose to violate that public trust and his duties. Today's sentencing of Mr. Alvarez demonstrates that theft of U.S. Mail, committed by a Postal Service employee, will not be tolerated and carries serious consequences. The public we serve can rest assured that the Postal Service Office of Inspector General, U.S. Attorney's Office, and our partner law enforcement agencies, remain committed to safeguarding the integrity of the U.S. Mail and ensuring the accountability and integrity of U.S. Postal Service employees."

According to court documents, beginning in about August, 2019, Alvarez, an employee of the United States Postal Service, began stealing smartphones placed into the mail for delivery to customers. Over the course of the next three months, Alvarez stole more than 400 phones, by surreptitiously opening the box as it passed his mail sorting station, removing the phone, and

then sending the empty package on for delivery to the intended recipient. On the day he was caught by Postal Inspectors, he had over a dozen stolen phones in his possession. When interviewed, Alvarez admitted to stealing high end, recently released, smartphones, which he subsequently sold for his own profit.

On June 25, 2020 Alvarez was charged by criminal information with Theft of Mail. He plead guilty to the charge on July 20, 2020.

During sentencing, U.S. District Court Judge Michael Simon ordered Alvarez to pay \$253,550 in restitution.

The United States Postal Service Office of Inspector General investigated this case. It was prosecuted by Quinn Harrington, Assistant U.S. Attorney for the District of Oregon.

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