



Bomb-strapped bank robbery co-conspirator charged with workers' comp fraud

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DOWNEY, Calif. - Aurora Barrera, 33, of Downey was arrested on charges related to her allegedly submitting a fraudulent workers' compensation claim for treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder associated with a robbery, that she actually assisted in staging, at a bank where she worked as an assistant bank manager.

"This conspiracy led to a major law enforcement response, including the bomb squad," said Insurance Commissioner Dave Jones. "It's shocking to think that, Barrera, a trusted financial institution manager would be a co-conspirator in a bank robbery and staged kidnapping, and then have the audacity to file a bogus workers' comp claim for traumatic stress and believe she could get away with it."

On the morning of September 4, 2012, Barrera claimed she was held hostage by two men, forced to wear a bomb and told to drive to a Bank of America branch in East Los Angeles where she was employed. Barrera claimed she was given instructions to remove money from the bank vault and place it outside the building, which she did. The bank robbery resulted in a massive response by local, state and federal law enforcement, including the bomb squad who determined the device strapped to Barrera was a fake bomb.

Two days after the robbery, Barrera submitted a workers' compensation claim for post-traumatic stress disorder. Barrera began receiving medical treatment and collected approximately \$2,453 a month in temporary total disability benefits. The total amount of benefits paid out to Barrera totaled \$35,573. An additional \$9,964 was incurred in medical and other insurance expenses.

An FBI investigation determined that Barrera was a knowing participant in the bank robbery. As a result Barrera was arrested and subsequently convicted for the bank robbery, along with her then boyfriend and two others. Barrera was sentenced on August 6, 2014 in Federal Court to nine years in federal prison and was given until September 8 to surrender.

Since Barrera was involved in the robbery, the workers' compensation claim was considered to be fraudulent. The subsequent criminal investigation by the Department of Insurance, in cooperation with the FBI, resulted in an arrest warrant for Barrera for charges of insurance fraud, burglary and grand theft. Barrera was arrested without incident at her residence in Downey and booked into the Los Angeles County Jail.

Barrera faces a maximum sentence of five years in state prison.

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Media Notes:

Arrest photo available.

The September 4, 2014 robbery resulted in the theft of \$565,800 of which \$400,000 has not been recovered.

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