



Riverside County District Attorney

# NEWS RELEASE

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## WANTED FUGITIVE IN IDENTITY THEFT AND FORGERY CASE LOCATED AND ARRESTED

INDIO – Today, Sept. 2, 2014, a man on the Riverside County District Attorney's Office Wanted Fugitive list was booked into county jail after being tracked down in Ecuador.

Christopher Douglas Diekmann, DOB: 10-10-86, of Cathedral City, was a fugitive in case INF064094. Diekmann is charged with a variety of felonies including impersonating another to obtain credit (identity theft), forgery, grand theft, and filing a false or forged document.

The crimes are alleged to have happened in 2008 and 2009 in the Coachella Valley area. Diekmann was charged with two other men in a real estate scam. According to the law enforcement investigation, vacant residences that were either abandoned or in foreclosure were identified by the defendants and a trustee's deed upon sale was created, listing the property as being purchased at auction. The title was then transferred and included forged signatures of bank officials as well as a notary stamp which had been stolen from a true notary. Once a "Quiet Title" was obtained in civil court, a loan would be obtained on the home, which did not legally belong to the defendants. The defendants reportedly would sometimes live in the home free of any rent or mortgage and, in some instances, the homes were rented to unsuspecting victims by the defendants so they could obtain income.

Also charged in INF064094 with Diekmann are George Wolfe of Cathedral City, who has a preliminary hearing scheduled on Oct. 3, 2014, at the Larson Justice Center in Indio, and Nicolas Kevin Barthel of Palm Desert. On Aug. 17, 2009, Barthel entered guilty pleas to four counts of identity theft and was sentenced to 16 months.

Regarding the apprehension of Diekmann, Riverside County DA's investigators assigned to the U.S. Marshals Service Pacific Regional Fugitive Task Force had been assigned the fugitive case in 2009. In 2010 or 2011, the DA's Office received a tip about Diekmann being in Ecuador after the caller saw Diekmann's Wanted Fugitive flier on the DA's website. After receiving and then confirming the information about Diekmann's whereabouts in Ecuador, attempts were made to have Diekmann deported from that country, but Ecuador has a non-extradition treaty. Ecuador would not assist in having Diekmann returned to the United States.

Last week, DA's investigators received information that Diekmann wanted to return to Riverside County to face the charges against him. At about 11:45 p.m. on Monday, Sept. 1, 2014, DA's investigators met Diekmann at Los Angeles International Airport where he was arrested and then booked at the Robert Presley Detention Center in Riverside.

DA's Wanted Fugitive fliers can be found here: <http://www.rivcoda.org/opencms/investigation/fugitive.html>.