

The Associated Press

Woman arrested in LA, posed as ICE agent

Thursday, May. 31, 2012

LOS ANGELES -- Sheriff's officials say a woman suspected of posing as an Immigration and Customs Enforcement agent to shake down illegal immigrants was arrested at Los Angeles International Airport.

Sheriff's Lt. Adam Ellison says 14 victims reported that Araceli Martinez ordered them to pay between \$4,000 and \$8,000 in exchange for legal resident status they were never given.

Detectives tried to find Martinez at her home Thursday only to learn she'd left less than an hour earlier to catch a flight to Mexico from LAX.

Ellison says detectives called airport police, who stopped Martinez's departure shortly before her flight was scheduled to take off.

Martinez is being held on \$335,000 bail on suspicion of theft by false pretenses. A deputy reached by phone did not know if she has hired an attorney.