



Rick Staly, Sheriff  
FLAGLER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE



RJ Larizza, 7<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit  
OFFICE OF THE STATE ATTORNEY

## JOINT NEWS RELEASE

**Date:** May 27, 2020

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# Pool Contractors Arrested for Organized Scheme to Defraud Twelve Customers Left with Unfinished Pools

The Flagler County Sheriff's Office (FCSO) was alerted to a potential contractor fraud case in May of 2019. At the time, a homeowner reported that they had contracted with Crystal Clear Pools for an in-ground pool installation in August of 2018.

By April of 2019, only 80% of the work had been completed and Crystal Clear Pools had not returned to complete the job despite numerous attempts to contact the company and four certified letters being sent by the victim and received by the company. The victim had already paid 96% of the cost of the pool installation to the owners of Crystal Clear Pools, 53-year-old Carlos Hernan Longo (DOB 7/16/1966) and 47-year-old Romina Campello De Longo (DOB 11/8/1972).

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Photos of the unfinished pool.

The investigation by the FCSO and the 7<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit of the State Attorney's Office revealed that numerous other victims of this company had similar complaints where Crystal Clear Pools accepted payment to build in-ground pools and failed to complete the job. From September 2017 through February 2019, the owners of Crystal Clear Pools endorsed, deposited, or cashed payments from twelve victims in the total amount of \$455,745.03 for work not completed.

"All 12 victims in these cases were left with a hole in the ground that could not be used as a pool and then had to go out and hire another licensed contractor to complete the job that they had already paid Crystal Clear Pools to complete," Sheriff Rick Staly said. "Now the victims are out even more money because these two fraudulently collected money with no intentions to complete the jobs. These cases are intricate and take a long time to build but Detective Castanheira the State Attorney's Office investigator did a great job building this case. This is also a good reminder to always check-out contractors with the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation and the Better Business Bureau before signing contracts. At least these fraudsters are in jail where they belong!"

Following the arrest, State Attorney R.J. Larizza said, "Crystal Clear Pools took advantage of customers who trusted them to perform as promised per their specific agreements but they took their customers' money and ran – leaving them high and dry. The State Attorney's Office Fraud Unit – in partnership with the FCSO – will hold them accountable for their fraudulent criminal activities."

The Honorable Judge D. Melissa Distler signed the arrest warrants on Tuesday, May 26, for Romina De Longo and Carlos Longo. The FCSO served those arrest warrants on Wednesday at 7 a.m. at the couple's home at 181 Bridgehaven Drive in Palm Coast. They were placed under arrest and booked into the Sheriff Perry Hall Inmate Detention Facility.

Both subjects were charged with a total of 12 counts: 1 count of Organized Scheme to Defraud over \$50,000; 10 counts of Grand Theft of Monies received by a Contractor over \$20,000; and 1 count of Grand Theft of Monies received by a Contractor over \$1,000.00. Each defendant is being held on a \$320,000.00 bond.

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