



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

Johnny Sutton, U.S. Attorney

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Shana Jones, Special Assistant
Daryl Fields, Public Information Officer
(210) 384-7440

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**FORMER SOUTHWEST AIRLINES EMPLOYEE AND HUSBAND
SENTENCED TO FEDERAL PRISON FOR FRAUD SCHEME**

United States Attorney Johnny Sutton announced that in San Antonio this morning, Althea Holden Jackson and her husband James Jackson were each sentenced to 30 months in federal prison for their roles in a scheme to defraud her employer, Southwest Airlines.

In addition, United States District Judge Orlando Garcia ordered that the Jacksons pay approximately \$800,000 restitution and be placed under supervised release for a period of three years after completing their prison terms.

Both defendants pleaded guilty to wire fraud on February 12, 2008. By pleading guilty, Althea Jackson admitted that while employed as an Administrative Assistant in the executive offices of Southwest Airlines she would order Southwest Airlines Non Revenue Must Ride (NRMR) tickets from the ticketing department ostensibly for the purpose of thanking Southwest passengers who assisted flight crews in the performance of their in-flight duties, including rendering aid to passengers who sustained injuries or became ill while onboard a Southwest Airlines flight. Rather than following established Airline protocol and mailing NRMR tickets along with a letter of appreciation to deserving passengers, Althea Jackson, fraudulently obtained these NRMR tickets and kept them for her own purposes.

The defendants created an informal distribution system through friends, relatives, acquaintances and James Jackson's co-workers at the Bexar County Justice Center where he was employed as a deputy sheriff. The Jacksons used this distribution system for financial gain by selling Southwest Airlines NRMR tickets at prices that were substantially less than the price that Southwest could command for the same ticket in the market place. Over 5,600 of these NRMR tickets were acquired fraudulently by Althea Jackson and distributed by her and her co-conspirators.

This case was investigated by the United States Secret Service and prosecuted for the government by Assistant United States Attorneys Bill Baumann and David Counts.

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