



Department of Justice

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NINE DEFENDANTS INVOLVED IN CHECK AND IDENTITY THEFT RING SENTENCED TO FEDERAL PRISON TERMS

Checks Were Stolen from United States Mail and Cashed at Casinos

ATLANTA, GA - VIOLA HILL, 61, of Atlanta, Georgia, and ADOLPHUS HILL, 64, of Atlanta, Georgia, were sentenced this afternoon, as the final two defendants sentenced this week in a large scale fraud scheme using identity and check thefts. Co-conspirators CALVIN HILL, 61, FRANK MITCHELL, 61, JAMES MCCARTER, 51, KAREN CLARK, 61, CARLOS JENNINGS, 36, AND TEQUILLIA HAMILTON, 35, all of Atlanta, Georgia, and REGINALD LAMAR SMITH, 52, of Lithia Springs, Georgia, were sentenced earlier this week by United States District Judge William S. Duffey, Jr. to serve federal prison terms on charges of bank fraud and aggravated identity theft.

“These defendants stole checkbooks, dates of birth and social security numbers from unsuspecting victims and used the victims’ checks and identifying information to commit more than \$600,000 in fraud,” said Acting United States Attorney Sally Quillian Yates. “Not only did the victims have the funds in their checking accounts depleted by the defendants’ criminal conduct, but they were forced to spend countless hours dealing with banks, casinos, retail merchants, credit bureaus and credit card companies in order to undo the damage to their financial affairs caused by the defendants’ conduct. The prison sentences handed out in this case are just punishment for the adverse impact the defendants’ criminal conduct had on the lives of the identity theft victims, as well as for the financial losses caused by the defendants’ conduct.”

VIOLA HILL was sentenced today to 9 years, 1 month in prison, with credit for 16 months already served, to be followed by 5 years of supervised release. She was also ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$622,900. VIOLA HILL was convicted of these charges on April 24, 2009, upon her plea of guilty.

ADOLPHUS HILL was sentenced today to 7 years in prison, with credit for 14 months already served, to be followed by 5 years of supervised release. He was also ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$622,900. ADOLPHUS HILL was convicted of these charges on February 23, 2009, upon his plea of guilty.

REGINALD LAMAR SMITH was sentenced to 8 years and 2 months in prison to be followed by 5 years of supervised release. He was also ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$286,257. SMITH was convicted of these charges on August 14, 2009, upon his plea of guilty.

CARLOS JENNINGS was sentenced to 4 years and 2 months in prison to be followed by 5 years of supervised release. He was also ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$206,500. JENNINGS was convicted of these charges on August 13, 2009, upon his plea of guilty.

CALVIN HILL was sentenced to 7 years and 10 months in prison to be followed by 5 years of supervised release. He was also ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$200,000. HILL was convicted of these charges on APRIL 24, 2009, upon his plea of guilty.

FRANK MITCHELL was sentenced to 6 years and 7 months in prison to be followed by 5 years of supervised release. He was also ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$200,000. MITCHELL was convicted of these charges on May 12, 2009, upon his plea of guilty.

KAREN CLARK was sentenced to 7 years in prison to be followed by 5 years of supervised release. She was also ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$200,000. CLARK was convicted of these charges on April 24, 2009, upon her plea of guilty.

FRANK MCCARTER was sentenced to 5 years and 9 months in prison to be followed by 5 years of supervised release. He was also ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$13,055. MCCARTER was convicted of these charges on April 24, 2009, upon his plea of guilty.

TEQUILLIA HAMILTON was sentenced to 3 years and 4 months in prison to be followed by 5 years of supervised release. She was also ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$622,900. HAMILTON was convicted of these charges on September 29, 2009, upon her plea of guilty.

According to Acting United States Attorney Yates, the charges and other information presented in court: From 2002 to June 2007, the nine defendants engaged in an identity theft and bank fraud conspiracy in which they traveled throughout the Southeastern United States and to Colorado where they negotiated forged personal checks which had been stolen through the mail from citizens in Georgia, Tennessee, and South Carolina.

REGINALD LAMAR SMITH was a United States Postal Employee who worked at the Bulk Mail Center in Atlanta, Georgia where boxes of checks were processed for

delivery to bank account holders in Georgia, South Carolina and Tennessee. SMITH stole boxes of checks and sold them to TEQUILLIA HAMILTON for \$200 per box. HAMILTON would in turn sell the boxes of checks to VIOLA HILL for \$250 per box. VIOLA HILL provided the names and addresses of the checking account holders to CARLOS JENNINGS who had access to credit information through his employer. JENNINGS provided the true social security numbers and dates of birth of the checking account victims to HILL for approximately \$100 for each set of identifiers he obtained. VIOLA HILL and her husband, ADOLPHUS HILL, would also obtain counterfeit driver's licenses to match the names and addresses of the checking account victims.

VIOLA HILL and ADOLPHUS HILL would then drive KAREN CLARK, FRANK MITCHELL, CALVIN HILL, JAMES MCCARTER and other check cashers to casinos in Mississippi, Louisiana, and Colorado. Once there, the HILLS would provide the check cashers with the stolen checks, the dates of birth and social security numbers of the account holders for the checking accounts on which the checks would be drawn and counterfeit driver's licenses with the checking account holders' names and addresses on them, but with the pictures of the check cashers. Using the stolen identities of the checking account holders, the check cashers would establish VIP accounts at the casinos. As VIP account holders, the check cashers were allowed to cash personal checks in amounts up to \$1,000. After the check cashers successfully cashed a forged check, they would give 50% of the amount of the check to VIOLA HILL or ADOLPHUS HILL and keep the remainder for themselves. After the casino trips, the defendants would use the stolen checks to purchase merchandise at retail establishments.

On June 6, 2007, VIOLA HILL, ADOLPHUS HILL, KAREN CLARK, FRANK MITCHELL, and CALVIN HILL were arrested in Louisiana. At the time of their arrests, law enforcement agents found 43 checkbooks belonging to other persons and multiple sets of identifications that matched the names and addresses in the checkbooks, but which had the defendants' pictures on them. During the course of the conspiracy, the defendants caused losses to financial institutions that exceed \$620,000. They also stole the checkbooks of approximately 200 persons.

This case was investigated by Postal Inspectors with the United States Postal Inspection Service and Special Agents with the Office of the Inspector General for the United States Postal Service.

Assistant United States Attorney William L. McKinnon, Jr. prosecuted the case. For further information please contact Sally Q. Yates, Acting United States Attorney, or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is www.usdoj.gov/usao/ga.