



Department of Justice

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SIX DEFENDANTS SENTENCED FOR IDENTITY THEFT AND ACCOUNT TAKEOVER SCHEME

Fraudsters Used Victims' Checks and Credit Cards For Half-Million Dollar Spending Spree

ATLANTA, GA - DIYIANA CLAY DAMAYO, 29, of Douglasville, Georgia; SHARELL LASHELL SLAUGHTER, 23, of New Hope, Minnesota; AARON JOEL BRUNSON, 26, of Atlanta, Georgia; CATHLEEN SUZANN CAIN, 28, of Atlanta, Georgia; and CHELETHIA LASHUN WRIGHT, 22, of Lawrenceville, Georgia, were sentenced today by United States District Judge Orinda D. Evans for participating in a credit card and bank account takeover scheme that victimized Chinese, Korean, Laotian, and Vietnamese residents in California, Oregon, and Washington.

United States Attorney Sally Quillian Yates said, "The victims in this case are hard-working and responsible people, many of whom are small business owners. The defendants chose a selfish and destructive criminal path by exploiting the victims' identities to finance extravagant shopping sprees at retailers ranging from Gucci and Louis Vuitton to Victoria's Secret. Today's sentences send a clear message to these defendants and others that there is no such thing as fast or free money."

"The U.S. Postal Inspection Service enforces the laws that defend the nation's mail system. The defendants blatantly used the U.S. mail for illegal use. This will not be tolerated. Postal Inspectors will continue to aggressively investigate anyone who insist on using the U.S. mail to further their criminal scheme," said Martin D. Phanco, Inspector in Charge of the Atlanta Division.

DAMAYO was sentenced to 11 years in prison to be followed by 5 years of supervised release, and ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$577,183. On November 5, 2010, DAMAYO pleaded guilty to one count of mail fraud and one count of aggravated identity theft.

SLAUGHTER was sentenced to 2 years, 4 months in prison to be followed by 5 years of supervised release, and ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$15,686. On

November 4, 2010, SLAUGHTER pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit mail fraud and one count of aggravated identity theft.

BRUNSON was sentenced to 8 months of home confinement to be followed by 3 years of supervised release, and ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$23,000. On November 8, 2010, BRUNSON pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit mail fraud.

CAIN was sentenced to 8 months in prison to be followed by 4 years of supervised release, and ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$21,000. On October 7, 2010, CAIN pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit mail fraud and six counts of mail fraud.

WRIGHT was sentenced to 6 months of home confinement to be followed by 5 years of supervised release, and ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$53,168. On October 1, 2010, WRIGHT pleaded guilty to one count of mail fraud.

Two other co-defendants previously pleaded guilty and were sentenced in connection with this fraud scheme:

● JABRINEKA NICOLE REDMON, 21, of Atlanta, Georgia, pleaded guilty on July 1, 2010 to one count of mail fraud. She was sentenced by Judge Evans on September 30, 2010, to 1 year, 2 months in prison to be followed by 5 years of supervised release, and ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$74,026.77.

● OTIS LOUIS ALLEN, III, 26, of Loganville, Georgia, pleaded guilty on June 7, 2010 to one count of conspiracy to commit mail fraud and four counts of mail fraud. He was sentenced by Judge Evans on September 29, 2010, to 8 months in prison to be followed by 4 years of supervised release, and ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$9,900.

According to United States Attorney Yates, the charges, and other information presented in court: From November 2008 through April 2010, the defendants participated in a conspiracy to take over victims' credit card and bank accounts and then used the accounts for their personal gain. The defendants obtained the victims' personal and financial information by calling the victims, claiming to be a representative of the victims' telephone or utility company, and requesting payment of allegedly unpaid bills over the phone.

DAMAYO, SLAUGHTER, BRUNSON, CAIN and WRIGHT then used the victims' personal and financial information to contact the victims' banks and creditors, order blank checks, and add themselves and others as authorized users on credit cards that were then sent to the Atlanta area. Using the fraudulently obtained credit cards and blank

checks, the defendants withdrew approximately \$80,000 in cash. Almost immediately DAMAYO, SLAUGHTER, BRUNSON, CAIN and WRIGHT made approximately \$500,000 in purchases from retailers, including Gucci, Louis Vuitton, Victoria's Secret, Apple Store, Best Buy, Nordstrom, Macy's, Target, Wal-Mart, Toys 'R Us, Gap Kids, Rooms to Go, and Miky's Wig, as well as \$3,300 worth of automobile rims at Wheels & Tires by Bailey, and even a \$1,500 Dachshund from The Pet Company in Lithonia, Georgia. The evidence showed that DAMAYO was a leader and organizer of the scheme. SLAUGHTER, BRUNSON, CAIN, WRIGHT, REDMON, and ALLEN participated in the scheme as runners, either by cashing forged checks or making purchases and cash advances using fraudulently obtained credit cards.

There are two other co-defendants in the scheme. MYISHA SHAWNETTE COLEMAN, 24, of Atlanta, Georgia, was a fugitive until her arrest on January 1, 2011, in Washington state. COLEMAN made her initial appearance before a United States Magistrate Judge in Atlanta on January 21, 2011. She faces charges of one count of conspiracy to commit mail fraud, thirty counts of mail fraud, and three counts of aggravated identity theft. LATIA JAVELLE CRANE, 28, of Atlanta, Georgia, was charged as a runner in the scheme and was convicted on one count of mail fraud after a jury trial on November 10, 2010. Her sentencing date has not yet been scheduled by the Court.

Members of the public are reminded that the indictment against COLEMAN only contains charges. The defendant is presumed innocent of the charges and it will be the government's burden to prove the defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt at trial.

This case was investigated by Inspectors of the United States Postal Inspection Service.

Assistant United States Attorney Jamila Hall and Special Assistant United States Attorney Louis Crisostomo are prosecuting the case.

For further information please contact Sally Quillian Yates, 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.justice.gov/usao/gan.