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**16 DEFENDANTS FACING STATE OR FEDERAL FINANCIAL FRAUD
CHARGES INVOLVING \$700,000 BANK FRAUD USING BOGUS CHECKS**

CHICAGO -- Seven Chicago residents are facing federal charges and nine others are facing state charges stemming from a U.S. Secret Service-led investigation of counterfeit and forged checks and related identity fraud, state and federal law enforcement authorities announced today. The seven federal defendants allegedly engaged in a bank fraud scheme to obtain in excess of \$700,000 by cashing bogus corporate and personal checks at various branches of two Chicago banks. The state defendants allegedly participated in the same scheme. The charges were announced today by Patrick J. Fitzgerald, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, Richard A. Devine, Cook County State's Attorney, and Arnette F. Heintze, Special Agent-in-Charge of the U.S. Secret Service in Chicago.

The investigation was conducted by the Secret Service-housed Chicago Organized Crime Task Force, which investigates organized groups involved in financial crimes. In addition to the Secret Service, the member agencies of the task force are the Chicago Police Department and its Financial Crimes Unit, the Illinois State Police, the Illinois Secretary of State Police.

Task force agents began arresting the defendants on Monday and Tuesday and additional arrests are expected, authorities said. The seven federal defendants were charged with one or more

counts of bank fraud in a 22-count federal grand jury indictment that was returned last week and unsealed after the initial arrests were made. The nine state defendants were each charged with one count of forgery in criminal complaints.

“These defendants and others were allegedly involved in a large-scale organized scheme to obtain money from banks using fraudulent or counterfeit checks, and in some cases fraudulent identities. Our task force is dedicated to pursuing this type of financial fraud and halting the related harm that it inflicts on individual victims and the banking community,” Mr. Heintze said.

According to the federal indictment, beginning no later than 1999 and continuing through at least 2000, three defendants, **Carl Williams**, **Anthony Neal** and **Brian Jackson**, obtained counterfeit and forged company and personal checks that falsely appeared to be issued by businesses and individuals who were customers of LaSalle Bank and Bank One. Williams and Neal allegedly recruited and supervised other individuals, including Jackson, **Creadell Burns**, **Ronald Franklin**, **James Howze** and **Joseph Golec**, who were willing to negotiate counterfeit and forged checks in exchange for a share of the cash proceeds or other inducements, including narcotics.

As part of the scheme, the checks allegedly were made payable either to the true identities of the individuals who negotiated, or attempted to negotiate, the checks or to aliases of those individuals. Williams and others obtained stolen and false identification documents, which were presented to the banks, along with the counterfeit checks, and they obtained counterfeit and unauthorized credit cards and credit card account numbers, which also were presented to the banks with the checks, the indictment alleges. Once they cashed the checks at various LaSalle and Bank One branches, the defendants allegedly used the money for their own personal purposes.

The federal defendants, the number of bank fraud counts against each and their status follows:

Carl Williams, also known as “CPO,” “Theodore Mayo,” and “William Mayo,” best known date of birth 12/31/67, and last known address 1919 High, Blue Island; 22 counts of bank fraud and an allegation seeking forfeiture of \$700,000; arrested Monday and pleaded not guilty; being held in federal custody pending a detention hearing at 9:30 a.m. tomorrow (Thursday Nov. 21) before U.S. District Judge Amy St. Eve;

Anthony Neal, aka “Ant,” dob 8/3/59, and last address 10725 South Cottage Grove, Chicago; 4 counts; arrested Tuesday and pleaded not guilty; same detention hearing as Williams;

Brian Jackson, aka “BJ,” dob 8/14/64, address unknown; 5 counts; fugitive;

Creadell Burns, dob 10/27/52, address unknown; 4 counts; fugitive;

Ronald Franklin, dob 9/1/66, and last address 6820 South Jeffrey; 2 counts; arrested Monday and pleaded not guilty, released on own recognizance bond;

James Howze, dob 8/10/60, and last address 10232 South Prospect; 4 counts; arrested Tuesday and pleaded not guilty; released on own recognizance bond; and

Joseph Golec, dob 11/2/62, address unavailable; 2 counts; arraignment pending.

A status hearing for all defendants in the case was scheduled for Jan. 8.

The state defendants, each facing one count of forgery are:

Resean Crawford, dob 8/3/73, last known address 505 East 83rd, Chicago; **Jessie W. Seay**, dob 6/7/82, last address 10745 South Wentworth, Chicago; **Theodore R. Jones**, dob 4/28/46, last address 4340 South St. Lawrence, Chicago; **Gretchyn Glover**, dob 6/26/50, last address 4858 South Cottage Grove, Apt. 204, Chicago; **Ebony F. Thompson**, dob 9/7/76, last address 7938 South Paulina, Chicago; **Keith Williams**, dob 4/8/61, last address 2722 East 75th Place, Chicago; **Steven Mitchem**, dob 8/1/48, last address 6408 South Marshfield, Chicago; **Alden Howze**, dob 9/8/62, last address 2373 East 70th, Chicago; and **Autress D. Lowe**, dob 1/28/57, last address 7922 South Dante, Chicago. For additional information on any of the state defendants, please contact the Cook County State’s Attorney’s Office.

In the federal case, the government is being represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Aylice Toohey.

If convicted, each count of bank fraud carries a maximum penalty of 30 years in prison and a \$1 million fine. The Court, which also must order restitution, would determine the appropriate sentence to be imposed under the United States Sentencing Guidelines.

The public is reminded that an indictment and complaints contains only charges and are not evidence of guilt. The defendants are presumed innocent and are entitled to a fair trial at which the United States and the State of Illinois have the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

Editors note: To arrange any interviews regarding these charges, contact Special Agent Robert Gray at the Chicago Secret Service office. The telephone number is (312) 353-5431.

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