



***United States Attorney
Southern District of New York***

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**PUTNAM COUNTY WOMAN SENTENCED TO 57 MONTHS IN FEDERAL
PRISON FOR DEPOSITING \$750,000 IN FRAUDULENT CHECKS
INTO LOCAL BANKS**

LEV L. DASSIN, the Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that RENATA KUEHL, 36, of Patterson, N.Y., was sentenced today to 57 months in prison for depositing fraudulent third-party checks into bank accounts and then withdrawing those funds. Sentence was imposed by United States District Judge STEPHEN C. ROBINSON in White Plains federal court.

RENATA KUEHL had been found guilty of one count of conspiring with MARIA DASILVA (KUEHL's mother) to commit bank fraud, and two counts of bank fraud after a seven-day trial in December 2008 at which, as Judge ROBINSON stated at sentencing, KUEHL had given perjured testimony. According to the evidence at trial:

In November 2006, KUEHL opened bank accounts in the name of Acquality Beverage Distributors at Putnam County National Bank in Putnam Lake, New York, Citizens Bank in Brewster, New York, and Webster Bank, in Danbury, Connecticut. In December 2006, KUEHL opened three more accounts in the name of Acquality Beverage Distributors at Citizens Bank. In March 2006, KUEHL and DASILVA opened yet another bank account in the name of MJS Consulting at Webster Bank.

Over the course of approximately six months, KUEHL and her mother deposited third-party checks into all of these accounts. These checks were all drawn from the accounts of American and international businesses, and were payable to individuals or businesses in South America. Each check was endorsed twice for deposit - first with the name of the intended recipient, and second with the signature of KUEHL or her mother. Once the funds from the deposited checks became available, KUEHL and her mother withdrew the money from the banks through overseas wire transfers, cash withdrawals, and checks written to themselves. After the money had

been withdrawn, many of the deposited checks were returned to the bank to stop payment or because the first endorsement was a forgery.

In total, KUEHL and her mother deposited approximately 46 third-party checks, totaling more than \$750,000, into these accounts.

MARIA DASILVA has not been arrested in this matter and as to her the charges in the Indictment remain merely accusations and she remains innocent unless and until found guilty.

Mr. DASSIN praised the work of the United States Postal Inspection Service and the Federal Bureau of Investigation in connection with this investigation.

Assistant United States Attorneys SARAH R. KRISOFF and JASON P.W. HALPERIN are in charge of the prosecution.

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