



Department of Justice

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ROLLER DERBY TEAM PRESIDENT PLEADS GUILTY TO FRAUDULENTLY OBTAINING MORE THAN 500 AIRLINE TICKETS FOR FAMILY, TEAMMATES

CINCINNATI – The president of the Cincinnati Roller Girls, Mercedes B. Stafford, who skates under the name “Sadistic Sadie,” pleaded guilty in United States District Court in Covington, Kentucky today to one count of wire fraud, admitting that she illegally obtained more than 500 airline tickets between May 2007 and October 2009 through her other job as an employee of United Airlines at the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport.

Carter M. Stewart, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio, Elizabeth Fries, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Louisville Field Office (FBI), and Chief Kevin Murphy, Cincinnati Airport Police Department, announced the plea entered today before United States District Judge Danny C. Reeves.

According to court documents, Stafford, 34, of Cincinnati, fraudulently bought “involuntary tickets” that airlines issue when a passenger’s flight is cancelled or delayed. She created fake ticket numbers that she used to buy real tickets on United and other airlines for herself, her friends, her family, the Cincinnati Roller Girls, and other individuals associated with roller derby events, including other roller derby teams.

Stafford admitted that she fraudulently booked more than 525 plane tickets that caused a loss to United of between \$400,000 and \$1 million. Stafford also admitted that she received more than \$50,000 in payment from the individuals or organizations who benefitted from the plane tickets.

Wire fraud carries a maximum punishment of 20 years imprisonment, a fine of up to \$250,000, and up to three years of supervised release. Stafford agreed to make restitution to United Airlines in an amount to be determined by the court. Judge Reeves will set a date for sentencing.

Stewart commended the investigation by FBI agents and Airport Police officers, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Timothy S. Mangan, who is prosecuting the case.

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