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BROTHERS SENTENCED IN BANK FRAUD AND ID THEFT RING

Tampa, Florida - U.S. Attorney Robert E. O'Neill announced today that on Friday, July 8, 2011, U.S. District Judge Elizabeth A. Kovachevich sentenced two half-brothers and a third co-conspirator for their participation in a bank fraud, mail theft, and aggravated identity theft ring. The group operated in the Middle District of Florida (MDFL) from mid-2007 through July 31, 2009. Anthony Joseph Henig (36, originally from Michigan) was sentenced to 104 months' imprisonment for participating in the bank fraud conspiracy, one count of mail theft, and two counts of aggravated identity theft. His half-brother, Gerald Thomas Lange (38, originally from Michigan) was sentenced to 76 months' imprisonment for the same offenses. Co-conspirator Kayla Rose Kirklin (28, Michigan) was sentenced to 45 months and 16 days of imprisonment for her part in the bank fraud conspiracy and for her conviction on one count of aggravated identity theft. In addition to being ordered to pay restitution in excess of \$100,000 as part of the sentences, the court also entered a forfeiture money judgment in the amount of \$180,000 for both brothers and \$130,000 for Kirklin. The money judgements represent the amount of proceeds that the defendants received during the commission of the charged criminal conduct. All three defendants had entered guilty pleas to the above identified charges pursuant to plea agreements in March and April of this year.

A fourth co-conspirator, Stephanie Renee Fields (27, Jacksonville) is scheduled to be sentenced on July 15, 2011. Following a jury trial, Fields was found guilty of participating in the bank fraud and one count of aggravated identity theft.

According to court documents and evidence presented at trial, starting on an unknown date prior to August 1, 2007, through on or about July 31, 2009, Gerald Thomas Lange, Anthony Joseph Henig, Kayla Rose Kirklin, and Stephanie Renee Fields conspired to and stole mail matters containing checks and identity information from various United States Postal Service mailboxes throughout the MDFL. The defendants used the information to create counterfeit checks and identity documents, as well as fraudulent invoices and purchase orders. The conspirators would then negotiate, cash, or attempt to negotiate and cash the fraudulent checks with various banks or businesses in Duval, Charlotte, Hillsborough, Manatee, Monroe, Orange, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, Sarasota, and Seminole Counties. Losses to victim banks and other businesses totaled approximately \$182,000, in addition to the failed attempts to negotiate an additional number of checks with a value of \$400,000.

This case was investigated by the United States Postal Inspection Service, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, and the Lakeland Police Department. It was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Donald L. Hansen.