



# Department of Justice

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Southern District of Alabama

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## **MOBILE WOMAN PLEADS GUILTY TO AGGRAVATED IDENTITY THEFT IN STOLEN CHECK SCHEME**

Today Melissa Rochelle Holifield of Mobile, Alabama, pleaded guilty to one count of aggravated identity theft relating to her theft of personal checks from the United States Mail, which she then fraudulently negotiated at local retailers in December 2007 and January 2008. She faces a mandatory two year prison sentence.

Holifield came to the attention of the United States Postal Inspection Service after complaints were received concerning stolen mail in west Mobile in January 2008. The investigation soon established that Holifield had, in fact, stolen mail from several individuals, including personal checks and credit card “convenience checks.” Holifield then negotiated the stolen checks at local Wal Mart, Target, and Kohl’s stores, claiming to be the person whose name appeared on the stolen checks. As part of her guilty plea, Holifield acknowledged that she committed the predicate offense of bank fraud by fraudulently negotiating the checks. She further acknowledged that she committed aggravated identity theft by using her victim’s name and account number to accomplish the fraud.

U.S. Attorney Deborah Rhodes noted that the law requires a mandatory two-year sentence for aggravated identity theft offenses. “There is no slap on the wrist in identity theft cases. Congress has mandated a two-year sentence for each offense, consecutive to any other sentence, and we will vigorously prosecute these cases.”

This case was investigated by the Mobile Police Department and the United States Postal Inspection Service. The case will be prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney D. Andrew Sigler.

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