



McGregor W. Scott

United States Attorney
Eastern District of California

Sacramento
501 I. Street, Ste 10-100
Sacramento CA 95814
Tel (916) 554-2700
TTY (916) 554-2855

NEWS RELEASE

Fresno
2500 Tulare St., Suite 4401
Fresno, CA 93721
Tel (559) 497-4000
TTY (559) 497-4500

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Contact: Rosemary Shaul, 916-554-2802
<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/cae>

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA IDENTITY THEFT RING CHARGED WITH BANK FRAUD, AGGRAVATED IDENTITY THEFT, POSSESSION OF STOLEN U.S. MAIL AND CONSPIRACY

SACRAMENTO--United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that JODI LYNN GARCIA, 31, of Paradise, California, was arraigned today on federal charges before United States Magistrate Judge Dale A. Drozd at the United States Courthouse in Sacramento, California.

This case is the product of a joint investigation by the Butte County Sheriff's Department, Chico Police Department, the United States Postal Inspection Service, and other law enforcement agencies in Northern California, specifically including state and local authorities in Glenn, Tehama, and Plumas Counties.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Michelle Rodriguez, who is prosecuting the case, the felony indictment alleges that GARCIA -- and several named and unnamed conspirators -- executed a scheme to manufacture checks with account numbers of others. Specifically, GARCIA is alleged to have conspired with HEATHER MICHELLE WILSON, 34, of Chico, California, TIFFANY ANN SABRAL, 27, of Chico, California, and TANYA LESLIE WELLMAN, 37, of Durham, California. The defendants and others who participated in the scheme are alleged to have stolen identification and account number information from the United States mail and elsewhere to create the fraudulent checks. The felony Indictment also charges the defendants and unnamed criminal associates with using identity information to cash the fraudulent checks. In this regard, GARCIA and co-conspirators are alleged to have created a phoney driver's license for fraudulent use and possessed and used stolen identity information in various victim names (including that of a deceased person) in order to cash the fraudulent checks.

GARCIA was arraigned on a single count of conspiracy, eight counts of possession of stolen United States mail, fourteen counts of bank fraud, and two counts of aggravated identity theft. GARCIA was denied bail. WELLMAN was arraigned on August 14, 2007 on one count of conspiracy and on four counts of bank fraud. SABRAL was also arraigned on August 14, 2007 on one count of conspiracy and on two counts of bank fraud. WELLMAN and SABRAL

were similarly denied bail pending further district court proceedings. On August 14, 2007 - after WILSON was arraigned on one count of conspiracy, eight counts of possession of stolen United States mail, six counts of bank fraud, and one count of aggravated identity theft – WILSON was released on federal supervision and pretrial conditions.

The case is assigned to United States District Judge Frank C. Damrell. The next United States District Court proceeding is scheduled for 10:00 am on Monday, September 10, 2007.

The defendants face up to 30 years imprisonment for each bank fraud charge and up to five years imprisonment for participation in the conspiracy. For the possession of stolen United States mail, GARCIA and WILSON face additional penalties of up to five years incarceration. For the aggravated identity theft charges, each defendant faces a minimum mandatory jail term of two years. Further, the defendants are subject to an order of restitution, a substantial fine, and a 5 year term of supervision. However, the actual sentence will be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables, and any applicable statutory sentencing factors.

The charges are only allegations and the defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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