



## U.S. Department of Justice

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### PRESS RELEASE

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**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION  
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#### IDENTITY THEFT

Memphis, TN- Terrell L. Harris, United States Attorney for the Western District of Tennessee announced today that a federal jury recently returned three indictments charging twenty-four individuals for their roles in separate identity theft schemes.

In one indictment, Phillip Lacefield was charged with engaging in money laundering, making a false statement to a federal agency, and identity theft. The indictment also seeks a criminal forfeiture of all proceeds of the money laundering and identity theft activities. The defendant utilized the names, driver's license numbers, and bank account numbers of various individuals in order to commit mail fraud, bank fraud, wire fraud, and forgery. If convicted, the defendant could be incarcerated for a maximum term of 15 years each for the 14 counts of identity theft, five years for the false statement charge, ten years for each count of money laundering, and fined a maximum of \$250,000 for the eighteen counts. The case is being investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigations and the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigations.

In the second indictment, six defendants are charged in a conspiracy to use identifying information such as names, social security numbers, and dates of birth in order to engage in credit card fraud and identity theft. The defendants, Lucretia Allen, Margie Lewis Wise, Johnnie Allen Lewis, Ralph Johnson, Ronnie Lewis, and Theresa Adams, obtained identifying information about employees of DeRoyal Industries, a business located in Powell, Tennessee, from an unidentified source. The identifying information was used to obtain official identification from the State of Arkansas, credit cards, and bank accounts. After obtaining the credit cards and bank accounts, the defendant fraudulently acquired money, property, and motor vehicles from businesses throughout Tennessee and as far north as Connecticut.

If convicted, the defendants face a maximum term of incarceration of ten years for each of the counts of credit card fraud and unlawful possession of access devices, a sentence of five years on the conspiracy count, and a fine assessed at \$250,000 for each count of conviction. The United States Secret Service is investigating the case.

In the final case, the Grand Jury charged seventeen individuals for their roles in an identity theft ring involving stolen personal checks and counterfeit business checks. The fifty-nine count indictment charges Florence Brooks with counterfeiting business checks and organizing a ring of individuals who stole personal checks and identification documents from mailboxes, school classrooms, Federal Express shipments, and motor vehicles. According to the indictment, she contracted with Tina Waddles to alter identification documents so that members of her ring would be able to pass the stolen and counterfeit checks at banks and various businesses. Co-defendant Keva Waddles also provided Florence Brooks with identification and account information on various

individuals through her employment with Ducks Unlimited.

The conspiracy count, a violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 371, carries a maximum sentence of five years. The twenty-one counts of possessing and making counterfeit business checks, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 513(a), has a maximum sentence of ten years on each count of conviction. If convicted of violations of identity theft pursuant to Title 18, United States Code, Section 1028(a)(7), the defendants could be sentenced to a maximum term of fifteen years for each count. A conviction for a violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1029(a)(5), using an access device to effect a transaction, carries a maximum penalty of 15 years of incarceration. Each of the counts also has a maximum fine of \$250,000. The case was investigated by the United States Postal Inspection Service.

Assistant United States Attorney Tracy Berry is prosecuting the cases.

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