



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

Johnny Sutton, U.S. Attorney

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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February 25, 2009

**ADDITIONAL INDICTMENTS HANDED DOWN IN
SOUTHWEST AIRLINES TICKET SCHEME**

United States Attorney Johnny Sutton announced the federal indictment this morning of ten individuals on charges of conspiracy to commit wire fraud and aiding and abetting the crime of wire fraud. Today's two-count superseding indictment charges:

Lance Williams, age 30, of Houston
David Anderson, III, age 29, of Houston
Luis Vasquez, age 40, of San Antonio
Holsey Dewayne Clayton, age 48, of San Antonio
Tasha Mathis, age 36, of San Antonio

Mattie Laverne Epperson, age 55, of San Antonio
Pedro Martinez, Jr., age 48, of San Antonio
Mark Gudanowski, age 39, of San Antonio
Deborah Robinson, age 48, of San Antonio
Mark Edward Kedrowski, age 38, of San Antonio

The indictment, returned by a federal grand jury seated in San Antonio, alleges that the defendants were part of a ticket distribution scheme masterminded by Althea Jackson and James Jackson. The Jacksons were sentenced to 30 months in federal prison on May 8, 2008, and ordered to pay approximately \$800,000 restitution.

According to the indictment, Althea Jackson, while employed as an administrative assistant in the executive offices of Southwest Airlines, ordered Southwest Airlines Non Revenue Must Ride (NRMR) tickets from the ticketing department. These tickets were supposed to be used for the purpose of thanking Southwest passengers who assisted flight crews in the performance of their in-flight duties, including rendering aid to passengers who sustained injuries or became ill while onboard a Southwest Airlines flight. Rather than following established Airline protocol and mailing NRMR tickets along with a letter of appreciation to deserving passengers, Althea Jackson, fraudulently obtained these NRMR tickets and kept them for her own purposes.

The indictment states that the Jacksons created an informal distribution system through friends, relatives, acquaintances and James Jackson's co-workers at the Bexar County Justice Center where he was employed as a deputy sheriff. The Jacksons used this distribution system for financial gain by selling Southwest Airlines NRMR tickets at prices that were substantially less than the price that Southwest could command for the same ticket in the market place. Over 5,600 of these NRMR tickets were acquired fraudulently by Althea Jackson and distributed by her and according to the indictment, those co-conspirators who were named today.

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The indictment further alleges that in the course of the distribution of the stolen NRMR tickets, Althea Jackson and James Jackson cautioned the defendants and others to whom they distributed the stolen NRMR tickets that they must never tell Southwest Airlines personnel that the NRMR tickets had in fact been purchased. The Jacksons “schooled” recipients of the NRMR tickets to explain falsely that the recipient had been given the NRMR ticket by Southwest because the recipient had been inconvenienced in some way by the airline. The Jacksons suggested that this “inconvenience” could include being “bumped” from a Southwest flight or for having luggage lost. Persons to whom the Jacksons distributed the NRMR tickets also were told that they could explain, falsely, that the recipient had assisted a member of a Southwest flight crew in a medical or other emergency and had been given the NRMR ticket by the airline as a token of the airline’s gratitude. The Jacksons and the persons to whom the Jacksons distributed stolen NRMR tickets, including the Defendants named today, knew that all of these explanations were false, and as such, were part of the conspirators’ scheme to defraud Southwest Airlines of the value of air travel and the revenue from air travel to which Southwest Airlines was otherwise entitled.

Upon conviction, each defendant faces up to 20 years in federal prison and a maximum \$250,000 fine per count.

This case is being investigated by the United States Secret Service sponsored South Texas Regional Task Force and is being prosecuted for the government by Assistant United States Attorneys Bill Baumann and David Counts.

An indictment is a formal accusation of criminal conduct, not evidence of guilt. The defendants are presumed innocent unless and until convicted through due process of law.

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