

PRESS RELEASE

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WOMAN SENTENCED FOR WIRE FRAUD

Madison, Wisconsin -- Erik C. Peterson, United States Attorney for the Western District of Wisconsin, announced that Melissa Christensen, 32, of Red Wing, Minnesota, was sentenced yesterday by U.S. District Judge Barbara Crabb to four months in prison after Christensen was convicted of four counts of wire fraud. Christensen pleaded guilty to these charges on January 13, 2009.

The wire fraud in this case involved adoption fraud. The evidence showed that Christensen told at least four different families whom she met on the internet that she was pregnant and wanted each family to adopt the unborn child. In each case, she later told the family that either the baby had died or that the father would not agree to the adoption.

The charges against Christensen were the result of an investigation conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Pierce County Sheriff's Department. The prosecution of the case has been handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Elizabeth Altman.

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