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Contact Kylie Mason

Phone 850-245-0150

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL STATE OF FLORIDA

Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

30-Year Sentences Secured for I.D. Theft Scheme



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody's Office of Statewide Prosecution today secured 30-year prison sentences for members of a massive identity theft scheme. The lengthy sentences are a result of three individuals, Carnessa Rouse, Gregory Engram and Samishia Askew stealing the identities of more than 120 individuals—most victims being above the age of 65. Using the victims' identities, the defendants opened fraudulent credit card accounts to fund luxurious lifestyles.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "We secured lengthy prison sentences for three defendants for their roles in a massive identity theft scheme spanning at least seven counties in Florida. These fraudsters victimized more than 120 Floridians—most of them seniors—by stealing and misusing ill-gotten personal information to open fraudulent credit card accounts. They then used the credit accounts to fund their extravagant lifestyles. Now their lifestyles will be much more modest in prison thanks to the great work of my Statewide Prosecutors and our hardworking law enforcement partners."

According to a law enforcement investigation, the trio frequently utilized aliases to hide personal identities from banks, law enforcement and other public entities—opening hundreds of credit card accounts in the process. The defendants used the fraudulent credit cards to rent luxury cars, stay in expensive hotels, embark on extravagant vacations and pay for everyday goods.

The Honorable Pat Siracusa, Circuit Judge for the Sixth Judicial Circuit of Florida, sentenced the trio to 30 years in prison each. Several victims of the identity theft, most ages' spanning 70-90, appeared or provided a victim impact statement for the sentencing. The victims testified about suffering through anxiety, stress and trauma.

Attorney General Moody’s OSP Tampa, with unlimited cooperation from State Attorney Bruce Bartlett, prosecuted this case. The law enforcement agencies involved in the investigation included the Clearwater Police Department, Florida Highway Patrol, Hillsborough County Sheriff’s Office, Pinellas County Sheriff’s Office, Port St. Lucie Police Department, St. Petersburg Police Department and U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.