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PARTNERS IN IDENTITY-THEFT SCHEME RELATED TO METH PLEAD GUILTY IN FEDERAL COURT

ATLANTA, GA - TERESA KNIGHT 28, and LORI LACKEY, 33, both of Oxford, Georgia, who organized and engaged in a scheme of identity fraud that spanned several counties, pleaded guilty to possession of stolen mail today. KNIGHT and LACKEY acknowledged that, throughout 2004, they illegally dealt methamphetamine and were often paid by their "customers" with stolen mail. The two women would then use financial documents or instruments contained in the stolen mail -- such as paychecks, credit cards or bank statements -- to commit identity fraud.

"This case demonstrates that the twin scourges of meth and identity theft often intertwine -- multiplying their damaging effects on the public, since one crime is used to fuel the other," said U.S. Attorney David E. Nahmias. "Today's guilty pleas send a message to individuals engaged in such criminal enterprises: the more types of crimes you commit, the more ways you can be prosecuted and sent to prison."

KNIGHT and LACKEY eventually compiled over 700 pieces of stolen mail either as payment for drugs or through their own theft, as they moved from receiving stolen mail from their meth "customers" to stealing it themselves from residential mailboxes. The mail was taken from homes in several different counties, including Jasper, Rockdale and Newton Counties.

A common ploy executed by the duo was to alter the name of the payee on a stolen check to one of their names, and then cash the check at a local grocery store. They would also make charges on credit cards recovered from stolen mail.

United States District Court Judge Clarence Cooper accepted the pleas from the two women to one count each of possession of stolen mail. Each faces a possible sentence of up to five years in prison. They are scheduled to be sentenced on on April 6, 2006, before Judge Cooper.

This case was investigated by the United States Postal Inspection Service, working in conjunction with local authorities.

Assistant United States Attorney Jon-Peter F. Kelly is prosecuting the case.

For further information please contact David E. Nahmias (pronounced NAH-me-us), United States Attorney or Gentry Shelnett, Chief, Criminal Division, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is <http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan/>.