



# Department of Justice

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## **MEMBERS OF INTERSTATE CAR THEFT RING SENTENCED**

### *Organization stole and altered Vehicle Identification Numbers of over 80 luxury vehicles*

Atlanta, GA - FRITZ JEAN BAPTISTE, 33, of Miami, FL, ASTREL CATY, 40, of Roswell, GA, PIERRE PHILLIP JERRY FIGARO, 26, of Stamford, CT, and ANGELA DENISE TUCKER, 36, of Marietta, GA, were sentenced today by United States District Judge Charles Pannell on charges related to the sale of stolen motor vehicles, altering vehicle identification numbers (VINs), and possessing vehicles that had traveled interstate after being stolen.

U. S. Attorney Nahmias said, "An automobile is one of the most valuable assets that most people own. These defendants ran a sophisticated automobile theft operation and caused losses of more than a million dollars. Breaking up these types of criminal organizations remains a priority."

BAPTISTE was sentenced to 10 years in prison to be followed by three years of supervised release. CATY was sentenced to six-and-a-half years in prison to be followed by three years of supervised release. FIGARO was sentenced to two and a half years in prison to be followed by three years of supervised release. TUCKER was sentenced to two and a half years in prison to be followed by three years of supervised release.

BAPTISTE, CATY, and FIGARO were convicted of these charges on February 15, 2006, after a two-week jury trial. TUCKER pled guilty on February 1, 2006, and testified at the trial of her co-defendants.

According to U. S. Attorney Nahmias and the information presented in court: Beginning by at least 2000 and continuing until 2001, BAPTISTE, with the help of associates, would cruise parking lots in Florida and Georgia looking for late-model luxury vehicles, such as BMWs and Mercedes, to steal. They would write down the VINs of the vehicles from the public VIN plates, and through a yet unidentified source, would have spare keys made for the vehicles. Not surprisingly, most of the victims reported having their

vehicles stolen from their homes or places of work, or other places where they ordinarily frequent. The stolen vehicles would be driven to the Roswell, Georgia, area where BAPTISTE and others would make fake VIN plates and stickers to replace or hide the true VINs on the vehicles.

The replaced VINs were for cars that were a similar model and year of the stolen vehicles and were obtained from cars posted for sale on the world wide web. CATY and BAPTISTE, with the help of FIGARO and another defendant, KIM CRAWFORD, sold the stolen vehicles to unsuspecting buyers by representing to them that the cars were obtained through an auction in Florida. The defendants typically provided fictitious bills of sale to the buyers and told them that they would take care of obtaining the tag and registration for the vehicles.

Once the cars were sold, TUCKER, who was employed at the Fulton County Tag Office at the time, would manually by-pass the proof of title requirement and would register and issue tags for these vehicles. CATY and BAPTISTE paid her \$50.00 for each vehicle that she registered. The investigation established that over eighty stolen vehicles were re-registered by TUCKER.

FIGARO and CRAWFORD were arrested by local police while in possession of stolen vehicles.

This case was investigated by Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Georgia Department of Revenue- Auto Crime-Title Fraud Unit, along with Officers and Detectives of the Roswell and Fulton County Police Departments.

Assistant United States Attorney BJay Pak prosecuted the case.

For further information please contact David E. Nahmias (pronounced NAH-me-us), United States Attorney or William L. McKinnon, Chief, Economic Crime and Cybercrime, 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 [www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan).