



# Department of Justice

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## **MEMBERS OF "XQUISITE EMPIRE" FRAUD RING INDICTED; SIX ARRESTS MADE TODAY, INDICTMENT UNSEALED**

Atlanta, GA - Six people have been arrested today and two others already in custody have been named in connection with a car loan fraud ring operating under the name of "Xquisite Empire." The arrests today are part of an indictment filed under seal on June 28, 2006, of a total of 20 defendants charged with conspiracy and wire fraud. With today's arrests the indictment has been unsealed and the defendants' names are now public record.

WILLIAM MARSHALL, 39, and KENNETH DAVID HARVEY, 28, both of Atlanta, Georgia, who are alleged to be the leaders of this conspiracy, are already in custody on unrelated charges. In addition to MARSHALL and HARVEY, arrested today were: DARTEZ DANIELS, 37, SHEENA MULLINS, 22, KEYOMO BUTLER, 35, TARA BROWN-FERRELL, 35, SHEER GODFREY - FIELDS, 34, and MELISSA FIELDS, 35, all of Atlanta, Georgia. The six arrested today are being arraigned this afternoon before United States Magistrate Judge Gerrilyn G. Brill. MARSHALL and HARVEY will be arraigned at a future date not yet set by the court.

"This fraud scheme was based on luxury cars and lies," said United States Attorney David E. Nahmias. "The conspirators allegedly designed the scheme to rapidly and fraudulently acquire large numbers of luxury vehicles through straw purchasers. The defendants then sold the cars to others who were unknown to the original lenders, leaving the lenders with very little recourse. We commend Chief Richard Pennington and the Atlanta Police Department for their valuable assistance in this investigation in working closely with the FBI and U.S. Postal Inspection Service to bring this scheme to an end."

FBI Special Agent In Charge Gregory Jones said, "The arrests today illustrate the problems created by 'straw buyers' and the recruiters that enlist their assistance. People that use their credit to conduct fraudulent purchases, be it high dollar vehicles or mortgages for homes or property, are considered a critical component of a criminal enterprise."

According to Nahmias, the indictment and information presented in court: Beginning in early 2002, MARSHALL and HARVEY allegedly created a scheme to defraud lenders by fraudulently obtaining approximately 224 high-end luxury vehicles valued at \$11.2 million, using over 50 so-called "straw" purchasers to purchase or lease the vehicles. MARSHALL and HARVEY created a company called "Xquisite Empire," which ostensibly was in the rental car business, but had no legitimate income from rental cars. MARSHALL and HARVEY allegedly supplied straw purchasers with false credit information, which the straw purchasers subsequently listed on loan applications. MARSHALL, HARVEY, and others instructed each straw purchaser to buy as many cars as possible within a thirty day period to prevent prospective lenders from learning about the straw purchasers' true liabilities through seeing the most recent loans relating to fraudulent purchases appear on credit reports. In return, MARSHALL and HARVEY paid the straw purchasers fees for obtaining the vehicles. MARSHALL and HARVEY took possession of the vehicles, turning them over to others who wanted to conceal their ownership of the vehicles. When the payments to the lenders stopped, and the lenders tried to repossess the vehicles, the straw purchasers had no knowledge as to where the vehicles were. Only MARSHALL and HARVEY knew who the actual possessors were. The lenders lost over \$2.4 million.

Members of the public are reminded that the indictment only contains charges. The defendant is presumed innocent of the charges and it will be the government's burden to prove the defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt at trial.

This case is being investigated by Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the United States Postal Inspection Service, and the Atlanta Police Department.

Assistant United States Attorney David Leta is prosecuting the case.

For further information please contact David E. Nahmias (pronounced NAH-me-us), United States Attorney or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, 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).