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**MARYLAND WOMAN CONVICTED OF MURDER AND FRAUD  
IN DECADES-LONG IDENTITY THEFT SCHEME**

*Con Artist Murdered Elderly Victim and Dumped Body to Prevent Discovery of Scheme to  
Fraudulently Obtain Hundreds of Thousands of Dollars Using Victims' Identities*

**Baltimore**, Maryland - A federal jury convicted Nancy Jean Siegel, age 60, of Baltimore, today of second degree murder-witness tampering, theft of government benefits, identity theft and fraud offenses in connection with a scheme to use the identities of victims, including an elderly man which she was convicted of murdering, to obtain existing and new credit for personal gain, announced United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein. The jury acquitted her on one count of bank fraud.

“It took thirteen years of hard work by intrepid investigators and persistent prosecutors for the trunk that served as Jack Watkins’ coffin to make it from a curb in Loudon County, Virginia to a courtroom in Baltimore, Maryland,” said U.S. Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein. “Nancy Siegel seduced Jack Watkins and stole his money, then she murdered him, put his naked body in a trunk and dumped it in the trash so that she could continue to collect his Social Security and retirement benefits for seven years. Today, justice has prevailed and Nancy Siegel’s horrendous life of con games and murder is over for good.”

According to testimony at the two week trial, Siegel engaged in a decades-long fraud scheme whereby she obtained the trust of her victims, obtained their personal financial information often through romantic relationships, and then used the victims’ personal financial data to access their existing credit accounts and obtain new credit in their names for herself without their knowledge. Siegel redirected the financial statements for the victims’ accounts to her own address to avoid detection by the victims, and was even able to access bank accounts.

Siegel married her first husband in 1968. Siegel began gambling, and took out credit in her husband’s name without his knowledge. When they divorced in 1985, he was left with over \$100,000 in debts related to her fraud. Siegel married her second husband in 1985 and again obtained credit using his personal information. When they divorced in 1993, he was left with over \$18,000 in debts related to her fraud. Additionally, Siegel used both of her daughters’ identities to open credit accounts in their names without their knowledge and directed the statements to addresses she controlled.

Trial evidence further showed that by the spring of 1992, Siegel started dating a man who

would subsequently become her third husband, and by September of 1993, without his knowledge, began having his mail forwarded to her own residence. The relationship broke off in the fall of 1994.

On November 21, 1994 Siegel met Jasper Frederick Watkins, a widower nearly 30 years older than she, when she sold him a mausoleum and burial services. According to witness testimony, Siegel and Mr. Watkins became inseparable and both represented their relationship as a romantic one, sometimes describing Siegel as Mr. Watkins's fiancée. Within months, by December 1994, Siegel began to use Mr. Watkins's existing accounts, making extensive charges for a variety of items, including ladies apparel, jewelry and larger purchases. Siegel changed the mailing addresses of the existing credit accounts to her mailing address and the accounts became delinquent. Siegel also obtained credit using Mr. Watkins' personal information. By August 1995, Siegel had accumulated substantial personal debt in Mr. Watkins's name, including tens of thousand of dollars in credit card debt, and an outstanding car loan of over \$40,000 for a BMW.

Siegel induced Mr. Watkins in August 1995 to obtain a \$44,000 mortgage on his home and then paid off the balances on 13 credit cards. She continued to exploit Mr. Watkins's credit and by November, convinced Mr. Watkins to take out a second mortgage and give her \$20,000, promising to marry Mr. Watkins and use the money to buy a condo for them to live in. She never bought the condo and she used the money for her own purposes. In fact, in the spring of 1995, she had reestablished her relationship with the man who would become her third husband.

Siegel sold Mr. Watkins's home in April 1996. Mr. Watkins was rapidly running out of assets to liquidate. Siegel began taking steps to have Mr. Watkins wrongfully committed for psychiatric care, while pawning his personal assets.

Mr. Watkins was murdered within 48 hours of May 13, 1996, when Siegel drove to Virginia and dumped his body near some trash on an access point to the Appalachian Trail in Loudoun County. The emaciated body was located almost immediately. The autopsy found fresh cuts and abrasions on the body, a blunt force trauma to the back of his head and toxic levels of a sedative in his body. Because there was no identification with his remains, his body was not identified until January 2003, using military records.

For seven years after Mr. Watkins's death and until July 2003, Siegel diverted Watkins's social security and retirement annuity payments to her own use, and continued to use his identity and financial information to open new accounts and use his existing accounts.

Siegel married her third husband in December 1998. She accessed his financial accounts without permission, took over existing credit accounts and obtained numerous loans and new credit accounts in his name, all without his knowledge. In all, Siegel fraudulently used her third husband's identity to obtain between \$200,000 and \$300,000 in goods and cash, including new credit extensions and money taken from existing accounts.

Siegel's fraudulent activities have resulted in hundreds of thousands of dollars in losses to between 10 and 50 individual and institutional victims.

Siegel faces a maximum sentence of life in prison for murder-witness tampering; 10

years in prison for each of seven counts of theft of government property; 20 years in prison for each of two counts of wire fraud and for each of two counts of mail fraud; 30 years in prison for each of six counts of bank fraud; and five years in prison for each of two counts of identity theft. U.S. District Judge Andre M. Davis has scheduled sentencing for April 23, 2009 at 3:00 p.m.

United States Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein thanked the Social Security Administration, Office of Inspector General, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the Loudoun County Sheriff's Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation for their investigative work. Mr. Rosenstein also thanked the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, Office of the Inspector General for their commitment of resources to the case as well. Mr. Rosenstein commended Assistant United States Attorneys Tamera L. Fine, Christine Manuelian and Richard C. Kay, who are prosecuting the case.