

## **Defendants Convicted in Widespread Identity Theft Scheme**

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The United States Attorney's Office, Northern District of Georgia

### ***Mail Carrier Obtained U.S. Citizenship Under Stolen Identity and Then Stole Identities of Over 85 Victims on Her Mail Route***

ATLANTA, GA - A jury in federal district court returned a guilty verdict late yesterday against OPEOLUWA ADIGUN, age unknown, and CHUKWUKA ONYEKABA a/k/a Gabriel Onyekaba, 34, both of Marietta, Georgia on charges of stealing the identities of more than 85 individuals in the Atlanta area and opening credit cards, loans, and bank accounts in their names. ADIGUN was also convicted of immigration, social security, and passport fraud.

United States Attorney Sally Quillian Yates said of the case, "Identity theft is a growing problem that destroys the lives of innocent citizens, resulting in years of victimization as they try to clear their good names and credit of the damage done by the criminals. These defendants ran a sophisticated identity theft scheme that included opening multiple accounts in victims' names, moving the criminal proceeds among different banks in victim names, using fake identifications, and buying ordinary gift cards with stolen credit cards to conceal the source of the proceeds. The jury's verdict brings some measure of justice to the many victims of these two defendants' crimes."

According to Paul Bowman, Area Special Agent in Charge of the United States Postal Service, Office of Inspector General, "Opeoluwa Adigun reflects just a very small percentage of employees who failed to uphold the trust and integrity placed in them. The U.S. Postal Service, Office of Inspector General takes these cases very serious and investigates them to the fullest extent of the law."

"The U.S. Postal Inspection Service is pleased with the jury's verdict. Identity theft continues to plague the American public. As long as thieves target the U.S. Mail, Postal Inspectors will continue to target those responsible," said Keith Morris, Postal Inspector in Charge of the Atlanta Division.

"The Paulding County Sheriff's Office, the investigating officer and I are all very happy with the verdict rendered by this jury," said Paulding County Sheriff Gary Gullede. "It is always rewarding to see our justice system work as intended - to hold the guilty accountable and protect the innocent public from further harm. It is also satisfying to see resolution brought to the 85+ victims of the crimes committed by Opeoluwa Adigun and Chukwuka Onyekaba. This case is the perfect example of good police work, inter-agency cooperation, careful prosecuting and an intelligent jury. I commend all involved for the great work and great result."

"This type of crime is even more egregious when it is conducted by a government employee using his or her position of trust for fraudulent purposes and financial gains," said Brock D. Nicholson, Special Agent in Charge of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Atlanta, "HSI will continue to vigilantly investigate any individual who engages

in activities that jeopardize public safety and national security.” Nicholson oversees all HSI activities in Georgia and the Carolinas.

According to United States Attorney Yates, the charges and other information presented at trial: Between May 2006 and March 2010, ADIGUN and ONYEKABA stole mail, credit cards, and other personal information from individuals in the Atlanta area, and then opened a variety of financial accounts under the victims’ names. As part of the scheme, ADIGUN obtained a job as a mail carrier in the Hiram Post Office under the name “Mary Afolabi,” an identity she had stolen from another person from Nigeria before ADIGUN entered the United States in 2004. During ADIGUN’s time with the Hiram Post Office, over 85 victims on her mail route reported that their identities were stolen and used to open multiple financial accounts in their names.

Using the information stolen from the mail route customers, ADIGUN and ONYEKABA applied for credit cards and bank loans in their victims’ names. They deposited the fraudulent loan proceeds into bank accounts opened under yet other victims’ names and then wrote checks from those accounts to their two fraudulent businesses, GMO Auto Services in Douglasville and Gabmike Limousine Service in Smyrna. They also used the fraudulent credit cards at their businesses.

Further, ADIGUN and ONYEKABA purchased gift cards and thousands of dollars of merchandise with the fraudulent credit cards. In March 2010, law enforcement officers stopped the defendants driving a Lincoln Navigator and found dozens of American Express, Walmart, and Target gift cards that were purchased with stolen credit cards issued to individuals residing on ADIGUN’s mail route in Hiram.

ADIGUN obtained a social security card and a U.S. passport and, in March 2009, was naturalized as a U.S. citizen – all under the assumed name of “Mary Afolabi.”

After a seven day trial, the jury returned guilty verdicts on all 44 counts it considered, including conspiracy, access device or credit card fraud, aggravated identity theft, bank fraud, mail theft, immigration fraud, social security fraud, and passport fraud. The charges carry maximum sentences that range from five to 30 years in prison each, and fines of up to \$1,000,000 per count. The aggravated identity theft charges require a mandatory minimum sentence of 2 years in addition to any other sentence imposed. Sentencing has not yet been scheduled before United States District Judge Richard W. Story. In determining the actual sentence, the Court will consider the United States Sentencing Guidelines, which are not binding but provide appropriate sentencing ranges for most offenders.

This case was investigated by the United States Postal Service, Office of Inspector General; United States Postal Inspection Service; United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s Homeland Security Investigations; United States Secret Service; Social Security Administration; Paulding County Sheriff’s Office; Douglas County Sheriff’s Office; Cobb County Sheriff’s Office; Hiram Police Department; and Cobb County Police Department.

Assistant United States Attorneys Stephen H. McClain and Shanya J. Dingle are prosecuting the case.

For further information please contact the U.S. Attorney's Public Information Office at [USAGAN.PressEmails@usdoj.gov](mailto:USAGAN.PressEmails@usdoj.gov) or (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is [www.justice.gov/usao/gan](http://www.justice.gov/usao/gan).