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MADIGAN: CHICAGO AREA WOMEN IMPRISONED FOR IDENTITY THEFT OF STUDENT LOAN FUNDS

Attorney General Announces Sentences for Sisters Who Stole Identities to Obtain Over \$300,000 in Financial Aid to Spend on Personal Items

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today announced that two Chicago area sisters were sentenced to 10 years in prison in an identity theft scheme to obtain more than \$300,000 in financial aid from the U.S. Department of Education that they spent on personal items.

Dasia Blue, 30, of Monee, and Olympia Blue, 34, of Glendale Heights, pleaded guilty earlier today in DuPage County Criminal Court to identity theft over \$100,000, theft of governmental property over \$10,000 and a continuing financial crimes enterprise. They were sentenced earlier today by Judge Brian Telander. As part of their sentence, the women must also repay \$319,000 in restitution from the scheme.

"The defendants stole personal information from dozens of victims to fraudulently obtain funds for personal profit," Madigan said. "This case demonstrates the importance of carefully monitoring your personal information to avoid falling victim to identity theft."

The defendants along with two co-defendants stole personal information from unknowing targets and used it to apply for financial aid from the U.S. Department of Education. Between January 2012 and February 2013, the defendants took out student loans totaling more than \$300,000 under the guise they were attending classes at the College of DuPage and the University of Phoenix. In reality, the defendants never attended classes, but instead used the money to buy personal items, including an \$800 pair of Jimmy Choo shoes.

The loans were issued in the form of debit cards and checks through U.S. Bank and Chase Bank. The debit cards and checks were made out to the identity theft victims but were sent to the defendants in varying amounts, from \$7,000 to \$13,000. A search warrant executed in February 2013 at the home of Dasia Blue and co-defendant Lorin Brown recovered records containing the identities of more than 50 people.

Co-defendant Brown, 37, of Monee, was convicted in 2014 for his role in the scheme and was sentenced to nine years in prison. A fourth co-defendant Jessie Wright, 28, of Glendale Heights, previously pled guilty and was sentenced to five years in prison.

The College of DuPage Police Department investigated the case, with assistance from the U.S. Secret Service. Investigations uncovered the scheme after one of the identity theft victims, who had never enrolled for classes at either of the schools, began receiving notices and bills for tuition payments.

Assistant Attorneys General Edward Snow and Albert Berry handled the cases for Madigan's Financial Crimes Bureau.

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