

Man Who Defrauded Wood River, Glen Carbon, Banks Using Stolen Identity Receives 42-Month Prison Sentence

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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EAST ST. LOUIS – Delvin O.E. Mills, 29, of North Lauderdale, Florida, was sentenced to 42 months in prison on Wednesday, July 20, 2022, in connection with his involvement in a bank fraud scheme that targeted female victims in Southern Illinois. The group targeted banks located in Glen Carbon and Wood River.

Mills was also ordered to pay restitution, a \$2,000 fine, and serve five years on supervised release upon his release from prison. Mills and his co-defendant, Mary Thornhill, attempted to cash checks at local banks using the furthest lane of each bank's drive-up window to avoid detection by the tellers. The "Felony Lane Gang" is a term used by law enforcement to describe individuals who use this tactic to defraud banks.

In July 2021, Mills conspired with others to cash stolen checks and fraudulently obtain funds from financial institutions using stolen driver's licenses belonging to individuals living in Southern Illinois.

Mills admitted members of the conspiracy broke into vehicles parked in public places throughout Southern Illinois to steal valuables left in those vehicles. Items included purses and wallets containing ID's and checkbooks. Members of the organization wrote checks from the stolen checkbooks made payable to other persons from whom the group had stolen identities.

Mills admitted that on July 19, 2021, he and Thornhill went to Regions Bank in Glen Carbon, Illinois, and successfully cashed a check made payable to a person whose identity had been stolen. Mills and Thornhill were arrested by officers with the Glen Carbon Police Department within minutes of leaving Regions Bank.

"This case involves a criminal scheme that has unfortunately become far too common in our District," said United States Attorney Rachelle Aud Crowe. "This office is committed to assisting our local law enforcement partners in their investigations of these serious crimes and to holding those individuals who target our communities, defraud our financial institutions, and steal the identities of innocent victims accountable. The significant prison sentence imposed by the court in this case is not only just punishment for this defendant, but should also serve as a warning to others contemplating such crimes."

Prior to arriving in Southern Illinois, Mills pleaded guilty to similar charges in the District of Oregon. Mills was on pre-trial release pending sentencing in Oregon when he fled the state. On June 5, 2021, Mills was arrested in Las Vegas, Nevada, for breaking into cars. After his release in Nevada, Mills traveled to the Southern District of Illinois to continue his spree.

On July 14, 2022, Mills was sentenced in the District of Oregon to 55 months in prison. According to the Judgment entered in the Southern District of Illinois, Mills' two federal sentences will run consecutively - for a total of 97 months in prison.

Mills' co-conspirator, Mary Thornhill, has pled guilty and will be sentenced next month. Thornhill's sentencing is scheduled for August 17, 2022.

The investigation was conducted by the following Illinois Law Enforcement Agencies: Glen Carbon, Clinton County, Germantown, Belleville, New Baden, Salem, and O' Fallon. Other agencies assisting with the case were the Kirkwood, Missouri, and St. Louis County Police Departments, along with the United States Secret Service and the Fairview Heights Domicile Office of the Springfield Resident Office. Assistant United States Attorney Zoe J. Gross prosecuted the case.