

DOJ: Two sentenced for scheme to pass counterfeit currency

Posted on Tuesday, Mar 21, 2017

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MADISON, WIS. – Jeffrey M. Anderson, Acting United States Attorney for the Western District of Wisconsin, announced that Danesha Phillips, 23, and Marlo Phillips, 19, both of Madison, Wis., were sentenced today by U.S. District Judge William Conley for passing counterfeit U.S. currency at numerous merchants in southern Wisconsin. Danesha Phillips and Marlo Phillips are sister and brother.

Danesha Phillips, who pleaded guilty on December 20, 2016, was sentenced to 42 days in prison, with credit for time served. Marlo Phillips, who pleaded guilty on December 9, 2016, was sentenced to one year in prison, also with credit for time he has served since his arrest in February 2016. Both sentences are to be followed by two years of supervised release. The defendants were also ordered to pay \$7,500 in restitution to the victimized merchants, jointly and severally with their other co-defendants.

During January and February 2016, Danesha Phillips and Marlo Phillips traveled with three other individuals to various cities from Baraboo to Janesville, passing counterfeit \$100 bills at restaurants and merchants. The group would make small-dollar purchases for which they would present the fake \$100 bills in order to receive a large amount of change in legitimate currency from the merchants.

The group was apprehended on February 23, 2016 by Janesville police officers during one such shopping spree, when police officers responded to merchant reports of the suspicious bills. In issuing the sentences, Judge Conley took into

account the youthfulness of the defendants and, particularly, their post-arrest contrition and cooperation with the investigation and prosecution.

Cornelius Stewart, 22, Madison, was sentenced to two years in prison in February for his role as a leader of the group. Stewart provided the counterfeit bills to the other members of the group in return for a portion of the change they would receive from merchants. Dominique Gaunichaux, 19, and Parish Barbary-Wheatherby, 21, also of Madison, will be sentenced on April 6 and 28, respectively.

The charges in this case were the result of an investigation conducted by the Madison, Baraboo, Stoughton, Verona, Oregon, Fitchburg, Lake Delton, and Janesville Police Departments, as well as the Sauk County and Rock County Sheriffs' Offices, all in coordination with the U.S. Secret Service. The prosecution of the case has been handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert A. Anderson.