



**U.S. Department of Justice**

United States Attorney  
Northern District of Illinois

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Gary S. Shapiro  
Acting United States Attorney

327 South Church Street, Suite 3300  
Rockford, Illinois 61101

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PRESS CONTACT:  
AUSA Scott R. Paccagnini (815) 987-4444

**McHENRY WOMAN SENTENCED TO 60 MONTHS IN FEDERAL PRISON  
FOR “SECRET SHOPPER” FRAUD SCHEME**

Rockford — A McHenry, Ill. woman was sentenced today in federal court by U.S. District Judge Frederick J. Kapala for mail fraud. **Gloria Denise Ford**, 45, was sentenced to 60 months in federal prison for her role in a “secret shopper scheme,” where victims applied to work-at-home advertisements on the Internet believing they were being hired to work as a “secret shopper” or payment processor. Ford, who pled guilty to the charge on July 6, 2012, was also ordered to serve 3 years of supervised release following imprisonment, and to pay \$68,922 in restitution to the victims.

In the written plea agreement, Ford admitted that after applying for work, victims received a letter asking them to send an email to the email address contained in the letter. The victims also received with the letter at least one counterfeit negotiable instrument, such as a counterfeit money order. The victims were instructed to deposit the counterfeit negotiable instrument in their financial institution, withdraw a certain percentage, retain a certain percentage as payment for their services, go to the nearest Western Union and wire transfer the proceeds as instructed. The victims were then instructed to report their experience, believing they were hired as secret shoppers to evaluate local businesses, and send their report via email to the email address contained in the letter. The participants in the scheme received the proceeds via the wire transfers before the victims learned that the money orders were counterfeit.

During the course of the scheme, Ford received about 10 packages from Nigeria, the United Kingdom, and France. Each package contained counterfeit money orders ranging from \$800 to \$1,000 each, that appeared to be issued by the United Postal Service, Safeway, Navy Federal Credit Union, U.S. New Mexico Federal Credit Union, and TruWest Credit Union. Ford received email instructions with attachments from her participants with a “secret shopper” letter and FedEx or Postal Express mailing labels, then placed a “secret shopper” letter in a FedEx or Postal Express mailing envelope along with at least one counterfeit money order, and affixed a label to the outside of the envelope. Ford mailed over \$1,000,000 in counterfeit money orders to victims throughout the United States, receiving at least \$12,000 as payment for her role in the scheme.

The sentencing was announced today by Gary S. Shapiro, Acting United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois; Thomas P. Brady, Inspector-in-Charge of the Chicago Division of the United States Postal Inspection Service; and Gary J. Hartwig, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Office, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Immigration & Customs Enforcement, Homeland Security Investigations.

The government was represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Scott R. Paccagnini.

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