



NEWS RELEASE

Warren C. Evans
Sheriff

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Sheriff, Prosecutor announce arrests & ID theft charges against former County employee

- ◆ *Female employee allegedly sold others' personal info as part of elaborate fraud ring*
- ◆ *2nd suspect used money for "going to prison" party while on trial in separate case*

Wayne County Sheriff Warren C. Evans and Prosecutor Kym L. Worthy today announced that their offices have dismantled an identity theft ring that they have traced back to a manager in one of the county's departments headquartered at the Wayne County Building in downtown Detroit.

Evans and Worthy say that Patricia Malone, 43, of Berkley, allegedly had been obtaining the personal information of high-level employees in her own office and sharing that information with her associates, who then established credit under their victims' names.

Sheriff's Deputies and the Prosecutor's Office have been investigating the case since early July, when the Sheriff's Office received a complaint from a county employee, stating that someone had opened up a credit account under her name. After three months of investigation, deputies have arrested three suspects, executed 12 search warrants and identified 39 victims who collectively have been scammed out of nearly \$100,000. Of the victims who have been identified, seven are employees who work in the same office as Malone. Many others are family members and friends of the initial victims, some of whom also work at the county.

"As someone who has spent more than 35 years in public service, I find it reprehensible that Ms. Malone allegedly would use her position at the county to victimize others - particularly many of her own co-workers," Evans said. "These are hardworking people who now have a financial nightmare on their hands as a result of her own greed."



The Leak

This morning, Worthy charged **Patricia Malone**, a county employee with more than 15 years of service, with four counts of possessing a financial transaction device without the owners consent - a four year felony. The warrant signed by Worthy alleges that Malone, who filed for bankruptcy in 2001, accessed and shared her victims' personal information with suspect DuJuan Whitehead. Wayne County's personnel office, which has been cooperating in the investigation, has terminated Malone's employment with the county in light of the felony allegations against her.

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When deputies executed a search warrant on Malone’s Berkley home, they found the personal information – including date of birth and social security number – of four current and former Wayne County employees. Malone is currently at large.

“The suspect preyed upon her own in this case,” said Prosecutor Worthy. “This case is proof positive that identity theft can happen to anyone, anywhere, at any time. This crime knows no boundaries.”



The Ring Leader

Once Malone provided him with someone’s personal information, Whitehead, in turn, allegedly shared the information with **Terry Lewis** of Detroit, who is considered the mastermind of the ring. It is unknown at this point how much Whitehead and Malone benefited financially from this arrangement, but it is apparent that Lewis profited considerably.

According to investigators, once Lewis had a victim’s name, date of birth and social security number, he was very skilled at using that information to learn as much as possible about his victim, their friends and family and

financial accounts.

By mastering his knowledge of all of the critical information that credit card companies would expect the legitimate account holder to know, Lewis was able to convincingly pass himself off as that individual and add himself or an associate as an authorized co-holder of the account.

At the time of his arrest, Lewis was facing multiple charges out of Plymouth, MI for identity theft and credit card fraud involving numerous victims. Evans says that because Lewis already expected to go to prison soon on those charges, his apparent motivation for stealing more money was to throw himself a large party before his sentence began.

One suspect caught in 2 investigations

Evans and Worthy say that one link in the investigation came as a result of a happenstance combined with good police work. At the time the ID theft investigation was underway, officers from Evans auto theft task force arrested an individual driving a stolen car. It turned out the individual was living at one of the addresses used by Lewis and others to receive stolen credit cards.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date Arrested</u>	<u>Charges</u>	<u>Status</u>
Terry Lewis, 32	7-22-07	- Identity Theft x 7 - Poss. Of Financial Transaction Device w/o owner’s consent x 8 - Obtaining/Poss. Personal Identifying info with intent To commit credit card fraud - False Pretenses x 2 - Habitual 4 th	<i>Plead Guilty -MDOC 18 mos – 10 years</i>

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<u>Name</u>	<u>Date Arrested</u>	<u>Charges</u>	<u>Status</u>
Patricia Malone, 43	T.B.A.	- Poss. Of Financial Transaction x4 Device w/o owners consent.	<i>Warrant Issued</i>
Dujuan Whitehead, 24	8-2-07	- Identity Theft x 2	<i>#3rd Circuit Court / Court Proceedings</i>
Christopher Hackworth, 25	7-27-07	- Identity Theft x 3	<i>#3rd Circuit Court / Jury trial 11-7-07</i>