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Thursday, November 17, 2016

South Florida Resident Sentenced to Prison for Stealing Housing and Food Assistance Benefits and Committing Aggravated Identity Theft

A South Florida resident was sentenced to three years in prison and ordered to pay \$187,997 in restitution for stealing housing and food assistance benefits and committing aggravated identity theft.

Wifredo A. Ferrer, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, Nadine Gurley, Special Agent in Charge, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Inspector General (HUD-OIG), Karen Citizen-Wilcox, Special Agent in Charge, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Inspector General (USDA-OIG), Kelly R. Jackson, Special Agent in Charge, Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation (IRS-CI), and Ann Deibert, Chief Executive Officer, Broward County Housing Authority (BCHA), made the announcement.

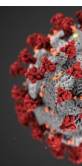
Jamye Sharne Barnes, a/k/a Jamye Barnes Sawyers, 36, of South Florida, previously pled guilty to two counts of theft of government money for taking HUD funded Section 8 program assistance and USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits to which she was not entitled, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 641; and one count of aggravated identity theft, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1028A(a)(1). Barnes was sentenced to 36 months in prison, to be followed by two years of supervised release, and was ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$187,997.

According to court documents, on May 17, 2011, Barnes applied to receive Section 8 housing benefits in Broward County, Florida through the Broward County Housing Authority (BCHA), which administers United States Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) Section 8 housing benefits. Barnes was approved by BCHA to



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866-720-5721
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Sexual harassment
in housing is illegal.



live at a house in Miramar, Florida, and HUD, through BCHA, paid \$1,154 in rent per month from July 26, 2011 through November 8, 2012 for this residence on behalf of Barnes. From May 2012 up to 2016, Barnes received a total of \$38,000 in benefits. Throughout that period, Barnes filed annual applications certifying under oath information relating to her income, employment, and bank accounts held, but failed to disclose income that would have disqualified her from receiving HUD Section 8 benefits.

On or about December 16, 2008, Barnes applied to receive United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, formerly known as food stamps. Barnes was approved by the USDA, and from May 2012 through 2016, she received benefits ranging from \$313 to \$526 per month based upon the information she provided to the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF). Throughout that period, Barnes filed annual applications certifying under oath her income, employment, and bank account records, but failed to disclose income that would have disqualified her from receiving USDA SNAP benefits.

From May 2012 through 2016, Barnes worked at Loyalty Financial, Inc., a tax preparation business in the Southern District of Florida. Barnes was the authorized signee of several bank accounts for Loyalty Financial, and Barnes used the bank accounts to pay the company’s employees and for her personal benefits. In 2012, over 30 fraudulently obtained United States Treasury income tax refund checks were deposited into one of Loyalty Financial's bank accounts. The total amount of the checks deposited was \$188,746.70. Barnes personally withdrew at least \$127,327 from the account.

Mr. Ferrer commended the investigative efforts of HUD-OIG, USDA-OIG, IRS-CI, and the BCHA. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Cary O. Aronovitz.

Related court documents and information may be found on the website of the District Court for the Southern District of Florida at www.flsd.uscourts.gov or on <http://pacer.flsd.uscourts.gov>.

Topic(s):
Identity Theft

Component(s):
USAO - Florida, Southern

Updated November 18, 2016



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