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TWO NEW YORK CITY EMPLOYEES PLEAD GUILTY IN
MANHATTAN FEDERAL COURT TO THEFT OF
BIRTH CERTIFICATE INFORMATION, WELFARE
RECIPIENTS' BIRTH CERTIFICATES
AND SOCIAL SECURITY CARDS

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, CHRISTOPHER PAUL, the Special-Agent-in-Charge of the New York Field Office of the United States Department of State, Bureau of Diplomatic Security Services ("DSS"), and ROSE GILL HEARN, the Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), announced the guilty pleas of two former New York City employees for identification fraud. EDWARD JONES, a former employee of the City of New York Department of Mental Health and Hygiene, Bureau of Vital Statistics ("Bureau of Vital Statistics"), pleaded guilty yesterday before United States District Judge GEORGE B. DANIELS to stealing parental identification information from birth certificates and selling such information to another individual. MICHAEL WILLS, a former employee of the Human Resources Administration, City of New York ("HRA"), previously pleaded guilty on March 2, 2010, before United States Magistrate Judge JAMES C. FRANCIS IV, to stealing copies of welfare recipients' birth certificates and social security cards and selling them to another individual.

JONES worked for the Bureau of Vital Statistics as a Clerical Associate in its Corrections Unit. In that position,

JONES processed corrections to birth certificates and on numerous occasions in 2005 and continuing through 2008, JONES took the names of parents on those birth certificates and sold such names to another individual who he knew would use the parental information to fraudulently obtain birth certificates and other identification documents.

WILLS worked for the HRA as a Clerical Associate in one of its job centers that provides welfare benefits to New York City residents. In that position, WILLS had access to copies of welfare recipients' birth certificates and social security cards. On numerous occasions in 2007 and 2008, WILLS took copies of those birth certificates and social security cards and sold them to another individual.

JONES, 37, of Queens, New York, pleaded guilty to means of identification fraud, which carries a maximum sentence of five years in prison and a maximum fine of \$250,000, or twice the gross gain or loss from the offense. In addition, the Indictment seeks forfeiture of all crime proceeds. JONES is scheduled to be sentenced on September 16, 2010 by Judge DANIELS.

WILLS, 59, of New York, New York, pleaded guilty to aggravated identity theft, which carries a mandatory minimum sentence of two years in prison. In addition, the Indictment seeks forfeiture of all crime proceeds. WILLS is scheduled to be sentenced on July 21, 2010 by United States District Judge BARBARA S. JONES.

U.S. Attorney PREET BHARARA said, "Edward Jones and Michael Wills wrongfully hung a 'For Sale' sign on the identities of helpless City clients for their own personal profit. Our Office, in conjunction with the Department of Investigation will continue to root out those who abuse their positions and victimize vulnerable New Yorkers."

DSS Special Agent-in-Charge CHRISTOPHER PAUL said, "The Diplomatic Security Service is firmly committed to working with the U.S. Attorney's Office and state and local law enforcement to investigate and bring to justice those who commit crimes involving identity theft, particularly passport fraud. When a public servant in a position of trust is alleged to have committed fraud, we vigorously investigate claims of corruption."

DOI Commissioner ROSE GILL HEARN said, "This former City employee sold his access to sensitive, personal information knowing it would be used for fraudulent purposes, according to the charges. This case and that of defendant Michael Wills shows the City and its partners have no tolerance for workers who

betray the public trust by contributing to the scourge of identify fraud. DOI will continue to work with the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York and the State Department to protect the integrity of information entrusted to government agencies."

Mr. BHARARA praised the investigative work of the Department of State, Bureau of Diplomatic Security Services and the New York City Department of Investigation.

These cases are being prosecuted by the Office's Public Corruption Unit. Assistant United States Attorney CARRIE H. COHEN is in charge of the prosecutions.

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