



Department of Justice

United States Attorney Stephen R. Wigginton
Southern District of Illinois

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FRIDAY, JUNE 10, 2011
WWW.JUSTICE.GOV/USAO/ILS/

CONTACT: James L. Porter
PHONE: (618) 628-3700

STOCKTON, CALIFORNIA WOMAN SENTENCED ON CONSPIRACY TO DEFRAUD

A California woman was sentenced in the United States District Court in East St. Louis, Ill., on June 10, 2011, for conspiracy to defraud, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, Stephen R. Wigginton, announced today. Catherine Sims, 25, a resident of Stockton, California, was charged with one count of conspiracy to defraud. The district court sentenced her to imprisonment of twelve (12) months and one day; a fine of \$10,000; supervised release of three (3) years; and a special assessment of \$100.

According to court documents, Sims conspired to commit mail fraud, wire fraud, and falsely assuming the identity of an employee of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). The charges alleged that Sims conspired with Michael Ronell Ussery, Jr., to defraud a federal inmate confined in southern Illinois. Ussery provided the inmate with Sims's home telephone number, telling him that this was the number for DEA Agent "Edwards." During several telephone conversations, Sims represented to the inmate that she was a DEA Secretary and gave the inmate false information that he could obtain sentence reductions by participating in and funding DEA undercover operations. As a result of the conspiracy, the inmate gave Ussery small, staggered payments totaling \$36,500.00. Neither Sims nor Ussery acted with any authority under DEA. Sims's co-conspirator, Ussery, pled guilty to charges of conspiracy to defraud, mail fraud, and wire fraud in November 2009. In March 2010, the district court sentenced Ussery to 61 months' imprisonment.

This case was investigated by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of the Inspector General, and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service. The prosecution of the case is being handled by Assistant United States Attorney Liam Coonan.

###