



## U. S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney  
Northern District of Illinois

---

Patrick J. Fitzgerald  
United States Attorney

Federal Building  
219 South Dearborn Street, Fifth Floor  
Chicago, Illinois 60604  
(312) 353-5300

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 17, 2010  
[www.usdoj.gov/usao/iln](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/iln)

PRESS CONTACTS:  
AUSA Mark E. Schneider (312)353-5356  
Randall Samborn (312)353-5318

### **FORMER MERRILLVILLE FBI TECHNICIAN INDICTED FOR ALLEGEDLY EMBEZZLING MORE THAN \$30,000 IN EVIDENCE**

HAMMOND, Ind. — A former employee at the FBI office in Merrillville was indicted yesterday on federal charges for allegedly embezzling more than \$30,000 in evidence that she kept for herself instead of properly returning various amounts of cash as she claimed to have done. The defendant, **Melissa L. Sims**, who worked as an evidence control technician for the FBI in Merrillville from 1998 to September 2008, was indicted yesterday by a federal grand jury in Hammond on three counts of embezzlement and one count each of making false statements and witness tampering, Patrick J. Fitzgerald, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, announced today.

Sims, 36, of Lowell, Ind., is scheduled to be arraigned at 1:30 p.m. on Sept. 30 before Magistrate Judge Paul R. Cherry in U.S. District Court in Hammond. The case was investigated by the Department of Justice Office of Inspector General. The U.S. Attorney's Office in Chicago is handling the prosecution in the Northern District of Indiana.

According to the indictment, between 2005 and August 2008, Sims embezzled more than \$30,000 in evidence that she was responsible for disposing of in accord with FBI rules and procedures. She allegedly made no effort to contact certain individuals to whom the various

amounts of cash were properly to have been returned, choosing instead to keep the evidence for herself. The indictment alleges 10 different dates on which Sims signed 16 separate forms stating that various amounts of cash evidence, ranging from \$2 to \$2,790, had been “released” or “returned,” when she had actually taken the money for herself.

The indictment further alleges that in May 2010 Sims tampered with a witness by attempting to persuade the witness to provide false information to a federal law enforcement officer relating to financial transactions between Sims and the witness. At the time, investigators were probing the source of more than \$80,000 in cash deposits to Sims’ bank account between 2005 and 2008.

The government is being represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Mark E. Schneider.

The charges in the indictment carry the following maximum penalties on each count: making false statements — 5 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine; embezzlement — 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine; and witness tampering — 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine, and restitution is mandatory. If convicted, however, the Court would determine a reasonable sentence to impose under the advisory United States Sentencing Guidelines.

An indictment contains only charges and is not evidence of guilt. The defendant is presumed innocent and is entitled to a fair trial at which the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

###