



CITY OF  
**FORT LAUDERDALE**  
**POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
PRESS RELEASE

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**IDENTITY THEFT RING**  
**CAPTURED**

The Fort Lauderdale Police Department is proud to announce the arrests of several individuals involved in an identity theft counterfeit check ring. This joint investigation, which also involved the United States Secret Service, began in early February and culminated with the arrest of individuals on Thursday, May 14, 2009.

Details of the investigation are as follows: information was developed that various individuals were engaged in a systematic, on-going course of conduct with the intent to defraud private citizens and financial institutions. The individuals, who were led by Mario Chandler and Christopher Wright, would recruit cashiers and network with bank employees and managers. The suspects involved in this ring took measures to circumvent fraud detection systems used by financial institutions.

The suspects would then take counterfeit checks and deposit them into their newly opened bank accounts. The counterfeit checks were also cashed at various locations to include Wal-Mart, Publix, Check Cashing Stores, and Banks. The suspects would create counterfeit documents by using payroll checks, rebate checks, and items taken from various burglaries.

Through hard work, the detectives assigned to this case, were able to discover approximately \$100,000 of fraudulent transactions. As a result of this, 41 individuals were identified as part of this ring. On Thursday, May 14, 2009, a joint arrest round up was conducted by Fort Lauderdale Police, United States Secret Service, United States Marshall Service, United States Postal Service, Broward Sheriff's Office, Coral Springs Police Department, Pembroke Pines Police Department, Miami-Dade Police Department, and Florida Highway Patrol.

Upon conclusion of the round up, 24 individuals have been arrested thus far. Arrest warrants have been secured for all of the suspects involved in this case. One of the arrests included a United States Postal Carrier.

At this time the investigation into this ring will continue. Anyone with information is encouraged to contact the Fort Lauderdale Police Department or Broward County Crime Stoppers at 954-493-TIPS.



Mario Chandler



Chris Wright  
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