



PRELIMINARY INSPECTOR GENERAL REPORT

2005-06-0303

December 29, 2006

MARION COUNTY PUBLIC ASSISTANCE FRAUD - 6

Inspector General David O. Thomas, after an investigation by Special Agent Alan McElroy and Staff Attorney Amanda Schaeffer, reports as follows:

This report addresses the arrest of defendant Shedrick Footman, criminally charged with the felony of welfare fraud on May 9, 2006, as a result of an Office of Inspector General (OIG) investigation of Family of Social Services Administration (FSSA) Caseworkers Geraldine Harper and Mary Miracle. Both Harper and Miracle, as well as a Stephanie Russell, were charged and convicted of welfare fraud as a result of the initial OIG investigation. The investigation was then expanded, resulting in this additional arrest.

Public assistance benefits are usually distributed through an Electronic Benefits Transaction (EBT) card. FSSA caseworkers, such as Harper and Miracle, supervise the issuance and maintenance of these EBT cards. This EBT card is similar to an ATM card in that the welfare recipient may withdraw cash

from automatic teller bank machines. One of the benefits in issuing public assistance through EBT cards is that the cash withdrawal transactions are captured by the computer for later investigative purposes.

In this case, Shedrick Footman was interviewed by OIG Special Agent Alan McElroy on October 13, 2005. Footman stated he is a friend of Harper and Russell. He is an Associate Pastor at the Greater Faith Missionary Church, where Harper is a member. He also owns and operates a small construction business. Footman is also acquainted with Russell, who was once his part-time secretary.

Footman stated that he has driven Russell to the ATM to withdraw funds from various public assistance EBT card accounts. Footman actually placed the card into the machine for Russell, as the machine was on the driver's side of the car and he was driving. Footman also received his own card from Russell, with his name on it, and admitted to using the card.

In a statement given by Russell on February 13, 2006, she stated that on at least one occasion Footman contacted her to acquire an EBT card for someone else. She stated that she gave an EBT card to Footman who then delivered it to the third individual.

Charges remain pending at the time of this report.

Dated this 29th day of December, 2006.



David O. Thomas, Inspector General