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RICHMOND MAN SENTENCED FEDERALLY IN CONNECTION WITH WEST END IDENTITY THEFT RING

(Richmond, VA) – John Alexander Caulder, age 41, of Richmond, Virginia, was sentenced yesterday to 129 months in prison for his role in an identity theft ring involving counterfeit checks. Caulder was also sentenced to five years of supervised release and ordered to pay \$238,951.01 in restitution to 52 victims. Caulder was sentenced following his guilty pleas in July 2006, to conspiracy to commit bank fraud and aggravated identity theft. The sentence was announced by Chuck Rosenberg, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia.

Caulder was indicted for conspiracy to commit Bank Fraud and for Aggravated Identity Theft and other offenses in May 2006, along with his sister, Katherine Caulder Staton; his mother, Susan Lively Caulder; and a friend, Heather Nicole Weston. Weston was sentenced on November 1, 2006, to a term of 65 months following her pleas to conspiracy to commit bank fraud and aggravated identity theft. Staton has also pled guilty to conspiracy to commit bank fraud and aggravated identity theft. Their mother, Susan Caulder, pled guilty to obstruction of justice. The two remaining defendants will be sentenced later this month.

According to court documents, Caulder, his sister, and Weston created approximately 268 counterfeit checks during a nine-month period which they passed throughout the central Virginia area, including: Richmond; Henrico County; Chesterfield County; Fredericksburg; and, Albemarle County. The checks totaled over \$330,000 and were created using the names and personal identifiers of over 104 individual victims. The checks were used to purchase a variety of merchandise, including jewelry, electronics, and furniture. All of the defendants agreed to the appointment of a federal Receiver who has since recovered proceeds of the scheme to be auctioned for the benefit of the victims.

Investigations of individual members of the conspiracy were originally initiated by detectives from the Henrico and Chesterfield County Police Departments. Through their participation with the Metro-Richmond Identity Theft Task Force, an investigation covering

multiple jurisdictions was undertaken that resulted in the execution of three federal search warrants and a federal indictment for bank fraud conspiracy and multiple charges of identity theft.

Caulder's prison term includes two years for Aggravated Identity Theft. The statute was enacted in July 2004 and mandates a consecutive, two-year prison term for defendants who use the identity of another person in relation to the commission of certain federal offenses, including bank fraud.

The Task Force was formed in the fall of 2004 and is housed at the offices of the United States Postal Inspection Service, located in Henrico County. Member agencies include: the Postal Inspection Service; United States Secret Service; Federal Bureau of Investigation; U.S. Treasury Inspector General, Office of Investigations; Henrico County Police Department; and, Richmond Police Department. In addition, assistance on this investigation was provided by the Chesterfield County Police Department. Prosecutions for the Task Force are handled by the United States Attorney's Office and the Office of the Attorney General for the Commonwealth of Virginia.

For more information on the Task Force, including assistance for victims of identity theft, visit: www.richmondIDtheft.com. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Laura Colombell Marshall and Special Assistant United States Attorney G. Michael Favale of the Attorney General's Office.

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