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DA Probe Leads to Woman's Arrest in Massive Online ID Thefts

Houston, Tx – A District Attorney's undercover investigation has led to the arrest of a Houston woman suspected of stealing hundreds of identities for alleged theft of funds from victims' bank accounts, District Attorney Patricia Lykos announced Thursday.

Possible victims include residents of the Houston area and elsewhere in Texas. They will be receiving letters from the District Attorney's Identity Theft Section, to alert them that forged IDs and bogus checks may have targeted money in their accounts.

DA's investigators, assisted by the Major Offenders Division of the Houston Police Department, made the arrest of Jeranda Flowers, 29, last Thursday. She remains jailed in lieu of \$50,000 bond each on two felony charges. Those include Identity Theft and possession with the intent to deliver about 28 grams of cocaine found in her apartment in the 4800 block of Chenevert.

John Brewer, Chief of the DA's ID Theft Section, said her capture follows an investigation which revealed that she had used an Internet-accessible phone to search the Publicdata.com site for personal ID information on more than 1,200 people.

The online information was then used in the creation of fake IDs and phony checks. As part of the probe, a DA's investigator went undercover to buy false documents and checks from Flowers, and more were found in her residence, Brewer said.

"The best way to determine if you have been the victim of this scheme, or any other Identity Theft scheme is to frequently review all of your financial accounts," Brewer said. "Look for any unfamiliar transactions, and periodically check your credit profiles with the three major credit reporting agencies."

The DA's unit is continuing the investigation to determine the extent of victims and losses. Several of the subjects of Flowers' online searches had already reported to police that they were ID theft victims, Brewer said.

The drug and Identity Theft charges against Flowers will be heard in the 182nd District Court.
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