



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE SENTENCED FOR DEFRAUDING EMPLOYER, SPRINT

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a Kansas City woman was sentenced today for fraudulently obtaining new cellular and Sprint PCS telephones in the amount of \$65,869.

Rasheedah Amina Bland, 25, was sentenced this morning by U.S. District Judge Nanette K. Laughrey to one year and three months in prison without parole. Bland also was ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$65,869.

Bland is a former customer service representative for Lock/Line, a Prairie Village, Kan., company that provides service contracts and insurance for wireless equipment and high-dollar electronic products, such as Sprint PSC telephones.

On August 29, 2002, **Bland** pleaded guilty to a one-count information charging her with the crime. By pleading guilty, **Bland** admitted that between July and December 2001 she had created customer orders and made claims for new cellular and Sprint PSC telephones in the amount of \$65,869. She used fictitious names to enter 156 false and fraudulent change orders and claims. As a result, telephones were shipped from Sprint's PSC warehouse in Louisville, Ky., to addresses under her control including her mother's residence in Kansas City.

Bland was employed with Lock/Line from approximately February 5, 2001 to December 27, 2001. As a customer service representative, **Bland's** duties included answering incoming calls from insured Sprint customers, entering customer claim information into the computer system, using her judgement to make claims approval decisions and creating change orders and filing claims for customers regarding their cellular and Spring PSC telephones.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Linda Parker Marshall. The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow