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PRESS RELEASE

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Attorney General Brown Announces Indictment of Three Individuals for their Roles in an Identity Fraud Scheme at the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration

BALTIMORE, MD (July 2, 2024) – Attorney General Anthony G. Brown today announced the indictments of Erica Danielle Watson, 29, of Brooklyn, Maryland; Larry Antonio Marshall, 54, and Shanice Tiera Smith, 34, both of Baltimore, for their alleged involvement in an identity fraud scheme at a Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) branch in Baltimore City. Watson, Marshall, and Smith are each charged with identity fraud scheme and conspiracy to commit an identity fraud scheme with a value between \$25,000 and \$100,000. Marshall and Watson are also charged with both bribing and conspiracy to bribe a public employee and Smith, a former MVA employee, is also charged with accepting bribes and misconduct in office.

“State employees have a responsibility to use their position to protect our residents, not to engage in conduct that puts others at risk of financial or personal harm,” **said Attorney General Brown.**” Our Office will hold accountable any state employee who abuses their position for personal gain.”

These charges stem from a fraudulent scheme whereby Watson, Marshall, and Smith allegedly defrauded the MVA’s system designed to award driving credentials to eligible drivers. In the spring of 2022, Marshall and Smith were employed as a contract custodian and Smith as a customer agent, respectively, at the MVA branch on Reisterstown Road in Baltimore City. The scheme began with Watson advertising on Instagram the issuance of MVA credentials, including drivers’ licenses and learners’ permits, for \$600 each. Smith and Watson then accepted payment for learners’ permits and drivers’ licenses from MVA applicants, and orchestrated a scheme whereby Watson assumed the identities of at least 66 MVA applicants in order to take the written portion of the drivers tests in their place. As Smith’s responsibilities as a customer agent included the administration of the knowledge tests, she permitted Watson to complete these tests for MVA applicants who were not present. Watson and Marshall allegedly then used a portion of the funds collected from MVA applicants to bribe Smith for her assistance in this scheme.

The defendants’ cases will be heard in Baltimore City Circuit Court.

A criminal indictment is merely an accusation of wrongdoing, and a defendant is presumed innocent until the state proves the defendant guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

In making today's announcement, Attorney General Brown thanked his Criminal Division, specifically, the Fraud and Corruption Unit, Assistant Attorney General Alyn Pearson, and Investigative Auditor Harry Armstrong for their work on this case, as well as the Security and Investigations team at the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration.

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