

Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Northern District of Ohio

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Cleveland postal employee sentenced to nearly five years for theft of mail and access device fraud

Jennifer Riccardi, 46, a former U.S. Postal Service employee who worked at the main mail processing center in Cleveland, was sentenced for her role in a scheme to steal from the U.S. mail and commit access device fraud. Judge John R. Adams sentenced Riccardi to 56 months of incarceration, three years of supervised release, and \$89,102 in restitution. Her co-defendant and live-in boyfriend, Joseph Dennis, has already pleaded guilty for his role in this scheme and will be sentenced on January 21, 2020.

U.S. Attorney Justin Herdman said: "This defendant is accused of stealing more than a thousand gift cards worth tens thousands of dollars, including birthday presents or other gifts people entrusted to the postal service for delivery to their family and loved ones. As we approach the holiday season, it is important to remind anyone who is thinking of stealing from the mail that they will be held accountable for their actions, just like any other criminal."

U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General Special Agent in Charge Kenneth F. Cleevely, Eastern Area Field Office, stated: "The vast majority of the 500,000 postal employees nationwide are hard-working, trust worthy individuals. However, when one of those employees choose to violate that trust and steal from the mail for personal gain, special agents with the USPS OIG will vigorously investigate and pursue federal prosecution when appropriate. When postal employees choose to steal from the mail, they risk their career, benefits, retirement, and possibly their freedom. To report theft of mail, or other postal employee crimes, contact special agents at www.uspsoig.gov or 888-USPS-OIG."

In one night alone, Riccardi stole more than 100 apparent greeting cards. Among the stolen mail that was opened was a card from a mother to her daughter signed "Love you! Mom" and a card from an uncle and aunt wishing a "Happy 1st Birthday."

According to the indictment:

Riccardi worked at the USPS Processing and Distribution Center at 2400 Orange Avenue in Cleveland. She stole cards, letters and other pieces of mail she believed contained gift cards, focusing primarily on brightly covered envelopes that appeared to contain greeting cards.

Riccardi concealed the mail she took from the mail stream in bags, her lunch box and other means. She transported the stolen mail to the residence she shared with Dennis during her mid-shift break or at the end of her shift.

Dennis and Riccardi sold at least 41 stolen gift cards and used stolen gift cards for purchases from Amazon, Kohl's, Starbucks and other locations.

On December 11, 2017, Dennis and Riccardi possessed at their residence at least 108 pieces of stolen mail, \$42,000 in cash, an automatic currency counter and 1,505 stolen gifts cards from approximately 230 merchants or vendors. Of those, 1,322 of the gift cards bore face values, which totaled approximately \$47,000.

The conspiracy took place between December 2016 and December 11, 2017.

This case was investigated by the U.S. Postal Service – Office of Inspector General, with assistance from the U.S. Postal Inspection Service and the Cleveland Division of Police, and prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Elliot Morrison and James Lewis.

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