

## Durham Attorney Charged With Bank Fraud

By Administrator

Tuesday, 24 November 2020 15:55 -

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Durham Attorney Tiffany Dawn Russell, age 41, had her initial appearance today before Magistrate Judge Robert T. Numbers, II, after a federal grand jury returned an indictment charging her, Rahne Cooper, age 31, and Darius Hinton, age 31, with conspiring to commit bank fraud and other related offenses.

According to the indictment, Russell, Cooper and Hinton applied for loans and credit cards with social security numbers that were not issued to them by the Social Security Administration. By doing so, the indictment alleges they created new credit profiles or synthetic identities for themselves to open financial accounts and make purchases from retailers without any intention of paying for the items and services obtained. The indictment alleges, among other things, that Cooper, Hinton and Russell conspired to use fraudulently obtained Care Credit cards from Synchrony Bank to make payments to Dr. Curves, who performed Russell's 2016 plastic surgery. In addition to using a synthetic identity, the indictment also alleges that Russell falsely represented on credit applications that she resided in Florence, South Carolina when she was residing in the Eastern District of North Carolina.

Cooper, Hinton and Russell were also charged with multiple counts of bank fraud. According to the indictment, Cooper and Russell used their synthetic identities to finance the purchase of vehicles and Hinton used his synthetic identity to purchase John Deere lawn equipment from Quality Equipment and electronics from Conn Credit Corporation. Each was charged with unauthorized use of access devices and multiple counts of misuse of social security numbers.

If convicted, they face statutory maximum penalties for the conspiracy and each substantive bank fraud count of 30 years' in prison, a \$1,000,000 fine, restitution and forfeiture.

Robert J. Higdon, Jr., U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of North Carolina made the announcement. The Federal Bureau of Investigation, Internal Revenue Service, Social Security Administration, and Raleigh Police Department have jointly investigated the case and Assistant U.S. Attorney Susan Menzer is prosecuting the case.