

NEWS RELEASE

# Luther Strange

Alabama Attorney General



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## AG STRANGE ANNOUNCES CONVICTION FOR POSSESSION OF FORGED AG DOCUMENT

(MONTGOMERY) – Attorney General Luther Strange announced the conviction of a Madison man who used a forged document said to be from the Attorney General’s Office in an attempt to hide his criminal record from a prospective employer. Neal Mathias Reisel, 28, pleaded guilty yesterday afternoon in Madison County Circuit Court to second-degree possession of a forged instrument.

“By using a forged government document to hide his criminal background, this defendant’s actions were a serious attempt to compromise this office,” said Attorney General Strange. “Due to the vigilance of the company he attempted to deceive, and the good work of investigators and prosecutors within the Attorney General’s Office, Reisel’s crimes were discovered and he will be punished in court.”

Sentencing will be set at a later date. Second-degree possession of a forged instrument is a class C felony, punishable by one year and one day to 10 years imprisonment and a fine of up to \$15,000 for the class C felony. Due to Reisel’s prior conviction, he faces a penalty of two to 20 years imprisonment and a \$30,000 fine under the Alabama Habitual Offender Act.

The Attorney General’s Office presented the following information about Reisel’s crimes to Madison County Circuit Judge Laura W. Hamilton during a hearing this afternoon:

After his selection as a prospective sales agent for the Liberty National Insurance office in Huntsville, a background inquiry revealed that Reisel had been convicted of a first-degree robbery in Limestone County and the company therefore declined to hire him. Reisel denied having a criminal record and claimed he had been a victim of identity theft and that someone else who was using his name had been arrested and convicted.

Reisel faxed a letter to Liberty National Insurance’s home office purporting to be from an Assistant Attorney General of the Alabama Attorney General Office. The letter stated among other things that the Attorney General’s Office was working to help Reisel restore his good public record, that the Attorney General’s Office stipulated that



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Reisel did not participate in the crimes for which he was charged, and that this was a case of identity theft.

Liberty National Insurance contacted the Assistant Attorney General, who examined the letter that was purportedly written by her and determined that it was a forgery. The Assistant Attorney General stated that neither she nor anyone in her division ever wrote the letter and that the letter was not typed in the style that she and the other Assistant Attorneys General used.

On March 24, 2008, Reisel admitted that he possessed the forged letter purportedly written by the Assistant Attorney General. Reisel had, in fact, been convicted of first-degree robbery in Limestone County on October 22, 2007. The Attorney General's Office presented evidence to a Madison County grand jury resulting in Reisel's indictment for second-degree possession of a forged instrument, the crime to which he today pleaded guilty. He was arrested on December 8, 2008, and has remained in jail since that time.

Attorney General Strange commended Assistant Attorneys General Stephanie Billingslea, Bill Lisenby, Peter Smyczek and Thomas Govan and Administrative Assistant Lori Arnold of his Public Corruption and White Collar Crimes Division, and Assistant Attorney General Tina Coker, as well as the Special Agents of his Investigations Division.