

MEDIA ADVISORY

For Immediate Release

June 29, 2021

MCTXSheriff Makes Arrests in Large Scale Coupon Fraud Operation

In November 2020, Detectives with the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office were notified by corporate Walgreens of a scam involving a substantial number of counterfeit coupons being used at retail outlets throughout Montgomery County.

As the investigation began, Detectives learned that a criminal organization created these sophisticated counterfeit coupons, which they then sold through various social media sites and were known in the underground world as "Dark Side" coupons. The counterfeit coupons were often customized to meet the request of those ordering them.

During the investigation, Detectives identified 87 individuals as being involved in this scam. These individuals are spread across 23 states from Washington to West Virginia.

Preliminary results from a clearinghouse that processes valid coupons for retailers have documented more than \$9.7 million dollars in losses and project there could be another \$10 million in losses as the investigation continues. Primary retail merchant victims include Walmart, Target, HEB, Kroger, and Walgreens.

As a result of the investigation, Detectives executed search warrants at 4 separate locations in Harris and Liberty counties, and over 4,000 products were seized as evidence. Due to the criminal activity being committed in multiple states the investigation is now being worked jointly with the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Detectives arrested three individuals for their involvement in the coupon case investigation. Cassandra Clark, Sheilo Cruz and Rudolph Cruz were arrested and charged with engaging in organized criminal activity.



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The Montgomery County Sheriff's Office, through a court order and with the cooperation of our business retailers, was able to recover numerous products that are being donated to six Montgomery County area non-profit organizations.

The Montgomery County Animal Shelter,

Montgomery County Women's Center,

Home of Hope,

Compassion United,

Family Promise,

The Montgomery County Sheriff's Office Alumni Association



Cassandra, Clark



Cruz, Sheilo



Cruz, Rudolph

Scott Spencer, Lieutenant
Montgomery County Sheriff's Office
Administrative Services
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