

TEACHERS FOUND GUILTY OF TEST-TAKING FRAUD: FACE LONG PRISON TERMS IF CONVICTED



It is indeed strange that such a shameless and unabashed scheme should have remained hidden for so long. For a decade and half, Clarence Mumford Sr. carried on his barefaced intrigue of substituting applicants for job teachers, then with forged identification to the Praxis examination, clearing which would evidence that the applicants are qualified to teach in the classrooms. Mumford, himself an educator, would send others to write the examination, that the applicants had to clear if they wanted to opt for a career in teaching. Amazingly, for 15 years, the scheme ran unabated, unchecked and undetected. Teachers in three Southern States paid him between \$1,500 and \$3000 to implement his modus-operandi to ensure that they passed the tests. Not only did such teachers start their 'noble' careers as cheaters, it also meant that thousands of unknowing students were taught by unqualified teachers. Mumford faces upwards of 60 charges of fraud and conspiracy, which charge him with forging driver's licenses. He would put the teacher's information on the card, but the photo he would affix would be of the test-taker. Teacher's who hired his services would give him their social security number to make the card seem more authentic and genuine. The hired-test takers would present these cards at the testing centers and so well were they made that they were allowed admittance and permission to sit for the tests. What made it even easier for Mumford was that proctors at test centers just give a cursory glance at the cards, unlike airport security where identification is scrutinized to the minutest detail. Mumford raked in tens of thousands of dollars, during the period that lasted from 1995 to 2010 in Arkansas, Mississippi and Tennessee. Charged along with Mumford is erstwhile receiver of the University of Tennessee and NFL wide, Cedrick Wilson. He is alleged to have used the services of a fake test taker for Praxis physical education exam. Having pleaded not guilty, he is out on bail on a \$10,000 bond. If the court finds them guilty, Mumford and the teachers face long terms in prison. Both could face between two and twenty years in jail on each of the charges made against them. Cheating is rampant in schools and colleges and the advent of technology has made it even easier for students to cheat. However, most cheating cases involved students and it is unusual and odd to find teachers implicated in them. ETS spokesman Tom Ewing said "These cases are rare, but we consider them to be very serious and something we have to guard against happening for all the honest test-takers, students and teachers." Prosecutors say that Mumford used the Internet and the Postal Service to register and pay the requisite fees for the tests and receive his ill-gotten payments. It is uncertain how much he paid the fake test-takers. Another teacher, who sat for the exam and cleared them with ease said that she did not understand why the teachers had to resort to this sort of fraudulent manipulation. She said that if the teachers were not confident of passing such an easy exam which should be a breeze for someone with even a high-school education, shows that they really are not fit to be in this highly responsible and noble profession.