



October 23, 2012

MADIGAN: CHICAGO MAN SENT TO PRISON IN IDENTITY THEFT SCHEME

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today announced a Chicago man pled guilty and was sentenced to four years in prison for possessing hundreds of stolen gift and credit cards with access to thousands of dollars held by the victims of his identity theft scheme.

Dimitar Vangelov, 27, pled guilty earlier today before Cook County Judge Nicholas Ford to continuing a financial crimes enterprise and was sentenced to four years in the Illinois Department of Corrections followed by two years of mandatory supervised release.

In March, authorities arrested Vangelov at his home in Chicago's Trump Tower and discovered a stash of hundreds of gift and credit cards containing stolen bank account numbers and credit card information of hundreds of victims who live overseas. The gift and credit cards seized by authorities had been re-encoded with foreign bank account numbers. Also uncovered during the search warrant were several "skimming" devices, or small machines rigged to read and steal personal bank and credit card information.

"The extent of this scheme shows just how pervasive skimming operations are," Madigan said. "The best way consumers can protect themselves is by monitoring their bank and credit card statements so that if they do find unauthorized charges, they can alert their bank immediately."

This case was investigated by U.S. Secret Service, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration and the Chicago Police Department and referred to Madigan's office for prosecution.

Assistant Attorney General Anshuman Vaidya handled the case for Madigan's Financial Crimes Bureau.

Madigan said identity theft continues to be one of the most reported issues to her office. Last year, more than 3,200 identity theft complaints were filed with her office's Consumer Fraud Bureau. Consumers reported incidents of fraudulent charges on their existing accounts, thieves opening new accounts in their names (including credit card, utility and cell phone accounts) and instances of bank fraud, such as stolen checks or fraudulent withdrawals made to a victim's bank account.

Madigan urged consumers to contact her **Identity Theft Hotline, (866) 999-5630** or **TTY (877) 844-5461**, for one-on-one assistance to report suspected incidents of identity theft to local law enforcement and financial institutions and for help repairing their credit and for protecting their identities.

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