



U.S. Department of Justice

Terrence Berg
United States Attorney
Eastern District of Michigan

**Suite 2001
211 West Fort Street
Detroit, Michigan 48226-3277**

For Immediate Release:
Contact: Gina Balaya (313) 226-9758

June 26, 2009

Event: Sentenced

Defendant: Bryan Joseph Ross et al

TWO METRO- AREA MEN SENTENCED IN CAR-THEFT AND COUNTERFEIT CASHIER'S CHECK RING

Two area men were sentenced today on charges of conspiracy to utter and uttering counterfeit Comerica Bank cashiers checks, United States Attorney Terrence Berg announced.

Bryan Joseph Ross, age 38, of Sterling Heights, Michigan, was sentenced to serve a total of 78 months in the custody of the bureau of prisons on charges of conspiracy and uttering counterfeit securities of an organization. Robert Burston, age 34, of Detroit, Michigan, was sentenced to serve 30 months in custody for conspiracy. Both men were found guilty by a federal jury in Detroit after a joint trial before the Honorable David M. Lawson, United States District Judge.

At the trial beginning February 5, 2009, the jury heard evidence that Ross organized and used a group of at least ten people to call unsuspecting private sellers of late-model, high end used cars, meet with the sellers playing roles as young couples or families to gain their

confidence, negotiate prices for the vehicles, and then purchase their cars using genuine-looking counterfeit cashiers checks, purportedly issued by Comerica Bank, which Ross arranged to have printed by a graphic artist he recruited into the scheme. Ross then used the others to retitle the cars and quickly resell them before the false nature of the checks was discovered. The proceeds were then divided among the participants. The evidence established that from December 2002 through June 2003, numerous valuable vehicles were obtained by Ross and his associates, including co-defendant Burston, in this manner.

These convictions bring to five the number of defendants who have been charged and federally convicted in this case. Local charges had been successfully prosecuted earlier in Macomb, Oakland and Wayne counties against a number of Bryan Ross's accomplices and runners in the organization.

United States Attorney Terrence Berg said, "These defendants perfected a scheme for getting owners of high-end luxury vehicles to part with their cars by using counterfeit cashier's checks. Through the diligence of the U.S. Secret Service and the courage of the victim witnesses, these perpetrators were brought to justice." Berg commended the United States Secret Service Detroit Field Office for its investigation that led to this successful prosecution. The men remain free on bond pending designation to their federal correctional facilities.