

STATEMENT OF FACTS

This investigation began in December 2007, after the Multi Jurisdictional Counterfeit Check Task Force, comprised of agents from the Secret Service; the Police Departments from Westerville, Grove City, Bexley, Worthington, Columbus, Powell, Genoa Twp., Baltimore, and Reynoldsburg; the Franklin County Sheriff's Office; the Ohio Attorney General's Office; and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, received a complaint from the Fredericktown PD about the passing of six counterfeit checks.

The Task Force discovered that six counterfeit checks drawn on the First Knox National Bank account of Trio Lanes Bowling Alley, Fredericktown, Ohio, had been passed at various businesses in Kentucky and the Columbus, Ohio areas. Each of these checks listed Douglas O. Kern as the account holder. These six checks were cashed for a total loss of \$1,572.08.

In passing some of these checks, the individual used a Kentucky ID in the name of Douglas O. Kern. Further investigation revealed that the photo of Kern on the Kentucky ID was actually that of the defendant, Thomas Hastings. Investigators also found that Hastings had obtained not only a fictitious ID in the name of Douglas Kern, but he also had an additional seventeen different State of Kentucky driver's licenses/identification cards in the names of other people.

On 01/16/08, after seeing a press release issued by the Ohio Attorney General's Office identifying the defendant as a person wanted for forgery and identity fraud charges, a security guard for the Inn Town Suites, 2420 E. Dublin Granville Road, Columbus, Ohio 43229, contacted the local police and identified the defendant as a person staying in room # 239 under the name Robert Burwell, one of the fictitious Kentucky Id's.

Investigators obtained a search warrant for the defendant's hotel room on January 16, 2008. During the execution of the search warrant investigating agents found, among other things,

- a. at least 30 different ID's which include fraudulently obtained genuine state ID's and/or driver's licenses from Kentucky, Indiana, Virginia and Ohio;
- b. 3 social security cards of other persons;
- c. 1 credit card of another person;
- d. 28 birth certificates of other persons;

- e. counterfeit W-2 statements and military records in various names;
- f. 101 printed counterfeit checks ready to be negotiated totaling \$58,420.23;
- g. blank check stock;
- h. Compaq laptop computer and Canon printer;
- i. 222 copies of customer checks stolen from Bill's Buckeye Stuff, Mansfield, Ohio;
- j. 312 copies of credit card receipts stolen from Bill's Buckeye Stuff, Mansfield, Ohio, which relate 277 different credit card numbers;
- k. Franklin County Municipal Court documents containing approximately 637 different social security numbers, names and dates of birth; and
- l. \$730 in counterfeit U.S. currency.

On January 17, 2008, I interviewed the defendant with Sgt. Steve Fridley of the Westerville Police Department, after he had been advised of his constitutional rights. In that interview, Hastings admitted passing counterfeit checks and doing identity theft for more than 30 years.

He admitted buying \$5,000 in counterfeit U.S. currency in 2002 or 2003. He stated he had been passing it "here and there" over the past several years. The \$730 in counterfeit currency found in his motel room is all he has left of the original \$5,000.

The defendant indicated he had acquired most of his identity theft information from the Franklin County Common Pleas Court, Domestic Division. He indicated he searched through the microfiche records and printed out documents which contain personal identifiers, such as DOB's and SSN's. He would then obtain copies of birth certificates from the Bureau of Vital Statistics to correspond to the individuals, for whom he had obtained personal identifiers. He then used that information to create additional fraudulent documents, such as W-2's etc., to use to apply for a state ID in another state such as Kentucky and Indiana. The fraudulent ID was then used to pass counterfeit checks under his new assumed identities.

The defendant admitted making all of the counterfeit checks on his laptop. He estimated he had passed between \$100,000 and \$200,000 in counterfeit checks since 2001.

The stolen copies of checks and credit card receipts were obtained when he worked for Bill's Buckeye Stuff under the name of Vince Hauck. He copied all of the checks which came in for payments to obtain account information for his counterfeit checks. He did the same with the credit card receipts. He intended to set up a fake business to run the credit card numbers through, but had not yet completed that project.

Hastings also admitted to opening bank accounts at First Merit Bank, Sky Bank and National City Bank using the identity theft information. He deposited counterfeit checks into those accounts and then withdrew the funds.

To date, investigators have calculated the following loss for purposes of the advisory guidelines:

- \$1,572.08 - checks passed on the bank account of Trio Lanes Bowling Alley, Fredericktown, Ohio;
- \$2,750.04 - checks passed at Kroger;
- \$4,566.93 - checks passed at Wal-Mart;
- \$144,500.00 - Based upon \$500 per credit card for the 277 credit card numbers from Bill's Buckeye, two stolen credit cards, and 10 credit card numbers found in the Municipal Court records
- \$ 58,420.23 - Based upon counterfeit checks which were printed and ready to negotiate found in search of motel room.