

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Feb. 23, 2009

Woodbridge Man Sentenced to 39 Months in Prison for Scheming
To Steal Retail Customer's Credit Card Numbers

(More)

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CAMDEN – A Woodbridge man was sentenced to 39 months in federal prison today for orchestrating a scheme to steal credit card numbers from retail establishments, including service stations, Acting U.S. Attorney Ralph J. Marra, Jr. announced.

U.S. District Judge Joseph E. Irenas also ordered Vishwas Soni, 26, to serve three years of supervised release upon the completion of his prison sentence. Judge Irenas is expected to issue an order of restitution in April.

On July 2, 2008, Soni pleaded guilty before Judge Irenas to a one-count Information that charged him with committing access device fraud. At his plea hearing, Soni admitted that for several months prior to March 14, 2008, he and others had been using credit card skimming devices to steal customers' credit card numbers from retail establishments, including service stations. The scheme ultimately compromised approximately 160 individual cardholder accounts, resulting in losses of approximately \$111,000.

Soni admitted that the credit card skimmer used was a small handheld electronic device that when used to swipe the magnetic strip on credit cards would capture and store the account number and other information from the credit card. Soni admitted that after he and others stole credit card numbers with the skimming device, he transferred those stolen credit card numbers onto counterfeit gift cards. The fraudulent gift cards were then sold, or used to purchase merchandise.

When arrested by Special Agents with the U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Postal Inspection Service, at a service station in Maple Shade on March 14, 2008, Soni was in possession of the skimmer device.

The investigation into Soni's co-conspirators is continuing.

In determining the sentence, Judge Irenas consulted the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges that take into account the severity and characteristics of the offense, the defendant's criminal history, if any, and other factors. The judge, however, was not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

Parole has been abolished in the federal system. Defendants who are given custodial terms must serve nearly all that time.

Marra credited Special Agents of the U.S. Secret Service, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Robert Slama in Philadelphia, and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, under the direction of Inspector in Charge Teresa L. Thome in Philadelphia, with the ongoing investigation.

The government is represented by Assistant United States Attorney Joshua W. Drew of the U.S. Attorney's Office Criminal Division in Camden.

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Defense Attorney: David Oakley, Esq. Princeton