



Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THREE INDICTED FOR CREDIT CARD FRAUD

RICHARD S. HARTUNIAN, United States Attorney, Northern District of New York announces the filing of an Indictment charging **KAREEM HIGHSMITH (37, of Syracuse, New York)**, **GLENN FRANCIS (27, of Brooklyn, NY)**, and **MAURICE PUGH (40, of Syracuse, New York)**, with conspiracy to commit access device fraud, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1029(a)(3) and (b)(2), and aggravated identity theft, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1028A. KAREEM HIGHSMITH was also charged in a separate Indictment with being a convicted felon in possession of a firearm, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 922(g)(1). If found guilty, the defendants face a statutory maximum sentence of 10 years imprisonment; a mandatory minimum sentence of 2 years imprisonment; and a maximum fine of \$250,000.00.

These Indictments followed a lengthy investigation conducted by the United States Secret Service, Syracuse Resident Office, the Syracuse Police Department, the New York State Police, and the Manlius Police Department. Search warrants executed by agents in Syracuse revealed a counterfeit manufacturing operation at the residence of KAREEM HIGHSMITH along with a .45 caliber handgun. As a result of the execution of three search warrants, agents located a device utilized to manufacture counterfeit credit cards, numerous counterfeit credit cards, and numerous gift cards that were purchased using the counterfeit credit cards. After obtaining the stolen credit card account numbers, the above three individuals created counterfeit credit cards and used them throughout New York State and other states in the Northeast to purchase gift cards and store merchandise. The total loss associated with this credit card fraud is approximately \$300,000.00.

The charges and allegations contained in the Indictments are merely accusations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Ransom P. Reynolds. Further questions may be directed to Executive Assistant U.S. Attorney John Duncan at (315) 448-0672.