



*United States Attorney  
Southern District of New York*

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**THREE ROMANIAN CITIZENS SENTENCED IN MANHATTAN FEDERAL  
COURT FOR SCHEME TO STEAL PERSONAL BANK ACCOUNT  
INFORMATION FROM ATMS USING "SKIMMING" TECHNOLOGY**

*Defendants Compromised More Than 1,100 Accounts And Stole At  
Least \$500,000 From Banks*

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that CATALIN BUCATARU, TRAIAN STAN, and GHEORGHE NUTU CIRPACI were sentenced today in Manhattan federal court for their roles in a scheme that used sophisticated "skimming" technology to secretly record the account data of customers who used bank Automated Teller Machines ("ATMs"). Using the recorded data, the defendants compromised more than 1,100 customer accounts from which they stole at least \$500,000. BUCATARU was sentenced to five years in prison, and STAN and CIRPACI were each sentenced to four years in prison. BUCATARU, STAN, and CIRPACI each previously pled guilty before U.S. District Judge HAROLD BAER, JR. to one count of conspiracy to commit bank fraud, one count of conspiracy to commit access device fraud, one count of bank fraud, one count of access device fraud, and one count of aggravated identity theft.

Manhattan U.S. Attorney PREET BHARARA stated: "These defendants thought that they could use stealth technology to steal hundreds of thousands of dollars from unsuspecting bank customers. But in the end these cybercriminals could not outsmart the investigators at the U.S. Secret Service and the prosecutors from my office. With today's sentences, these defendants will now be behind bars and unable to steal from any more innocent victims."

According to the Superseding Indictment to which BUCATARU, STAN, and CIRPACI pled guilty, other court documents, and statements made in court:

BUCATARU, 37, of Glendale, New York, STAN, 39, of Woodhaven, New York, and CIRPACI, 40, of Glendale, New York, and their co-conspirators, TUDOREL CALIN and ALIN MUNTEANU, participated in an ATM skimming scheme based in New York and

Washington, D.C., that lasted from September 2009 through October 2010. As part of the scheme, BUCATARU, STAN, and CIRPACI and their co-conspirators installed electronic devices on ATM card readers that secretly recorded a customer's bank account data when he or she used an ATM. They also installed hidden "pin hole" video cameras on ATM machines that secretly recorded customers' personal identification numbers ("PINs") as these numbers were pressed on the ATM keypads. The defendants associated the stolen bank account numbers with their corresponding PINs, and encoded blank cards with the information. The defendants then used the cards to withdraw funds from the compromised accounts.

BUCATARU, STAN, and CIRPACI and their co-conspirators targeted Bank of America and SunTrust Bank branches located in the New York City area, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Washington D.C., and elsewhere. Bank of America and SunTrust Bank ultimately reimbursed their customers for their reported losses.

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In addition to the prison terms, Judge BAER sentenced each of the defendants to four years of supervised release. Judge BAER imposed an order of forfeiture in the amount of \$390,000, a restitution order in the amount of \$390,000, and a special assessment of \$500 on both BUCATARU and STAN. He imposed an order of forfeiture in the amount of \$184,000, a restitution order in the amount of \$184,000, and a special assessment of \$500 on CIRPACI.

CALIN, 26, of Ridgewood, New York and MUNTEANU, 27, of Ridgewood, New York, previously pled guilty based on their participation in the conspiracy, but have not yet been sentenced.

Mr. BHARARA praised the United States Secret Service in New York, as well as in Washington, DC, for their outstanding work in investigating this case. He also thanked Bank of America and SunTrust Bank for their cooperation in the investigation as well as the U.S. Attorney's Offices in Washington, D.C., Alexandria, Virginia, and Greenbelt, Maryland for their assistance.

This case is being prosecuted by the Office's General Crimes Unit. Assistant U.S. Attorney TIMOTHY T. HOWARD is in charge of the prosecution.

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