

Department of Justice

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Western District of New York

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ORCHARD PARK MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO WIRE FRAUD

BUFFALO, N.Y.-- U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr. announced today that Robert Jones, 27, of Orchard Park, N.Y., pleaded guilty before U.S. District Court Judge Richard J. Arcara, to wire fraud. The charge carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Edward H. White, who is handling the case, stated that between November of 2009 and January of 2010, the defendant sent a series of emails to a victim indicating that he was purchasing a hotel and needed a short term loan to cover closing costs and to release a freeze on his bank account. Jones also indicated that if the victim loaned him the money, he would pay it back within three weeks. The victim provided two checks to Jones totaling \$50,800. The defendant did not purchase a hotel nor did he pay back the money to the victim.

Jones also admitted to fraudulently inducing another victim to provide him with \$154,508.50 for the purchase of an auto repair shop and two fast food franchises, none of which were ever purchased. The defendant further admitted to fraudulently using social security numbers of other individuals to obtain services from several utility providers.

The plea is the culmination of an investigation on the part of Inspectors of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, under the direction of Inspector-in-Charge Robert Bethel, Special Agents of the Department of Homeland Security, Coast Guard Investigative Service, under the direction of Captain Robert Burchell, and the Orchard Park Police Department, under the direction of Chief Andrew Benz.

Sentencing is scheduled for July 3, 2012 at 1:00 p.m. in Buffalo, N.Y., before Judge Arcara.

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