



U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney

Eastern District of Pennsylvania

615 Chestnut Street

Suite 1250

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106-4476

(215) 861-8200

For Immediate Release

May 12, 2008

COUPLE CHARGED IN IDENTITY THEFT SCHEMES

PHILADELPHIA - United States Attorney Pat Meehan today announced the filing of an Information¹ against Edward K. Anderton and Jocelyn Kirsch charging conspiracy, aggravated identity theft, access device fraud, bank fraud, and money laundering. Joining in today's announcement were FBI Special Agent-in-Charge Janice Fedarcyk and U.S. Postal Inspection Service Assistant Inspector-in-Charge Oriey Glenn. The information alleges that between November 2006 and November 30, 2007, Anderton and Kirsch stole identity information, credit cards, and credit card account information from numerous victims, including friends, co-workers, neighbors, fellow students, bar patrons, and others, and used those stolen materials extensively to buy merchandise and obtain cash.

According to the information, on several occasions, the defendants stole purses that were left unattended at a Philadelphia bar and then used the victims' credit cards to make purchases. To increase the fraud potential before the cards were cancelled, they telephoned at least one victim and impersonated a police officer, telling the victim that her purse had been recovered and would be returned the next morning. The couple also stole credit card account information from co-workers and used that information to buy thousands of dollars in computer and other electronic equipment. Anderton worked at a Philadelphia real estate equity firm at the time, and Kirsch was an intern at an international corporation. Defendant Anderton also allegedly stole identity information from an individual who had applied for a position with Anderton's employer and who had provided his personal information as part of his application. To increase the fraud potential as they had with the purse-snatching victims, the defendants attempted to obtain additional identifying information from the victims through ruses such as telephoning a victim and posing as a human resources representative who needed additional personal information for company records.

¹An Indictment or Information is an accusation. A defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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“The ripple effect of identity theft reaches every consumer and causes cracks in the foundation of our economic system,” Meehan said. “As alleged in the information, these defendants helped themselves to the financial viability of their friends and co-workers, re-inventing ways in which to victimize those who had trusted them, for little more than their own entertainment.”

According to the information, Anderton and Kirsch stole personal checks, utility bills, credit card statements, and other personal documents from the homes of friends either when they were guests in the homes or, in one case, by burglarizing the friend’s home. They also broke into the homes of neighbors living in their apartment complex with keys they had stolen from the apartment complex. Anderton also burglarized men’s lockers in his office building’s fitness center and stole identity and credit card account information. The defendants used the names, identities, and credit card accounts of their various victims to purchase merchandise, obtain new credit cards, negotiate “convenience checks” from financial institutions, and open PayPal and eBay accounts. Defendants Anderton and Kirsch then used eBay to sell thousands of dollars in merchandise, including lap top computers and ipods that they had obtained through their fraud scheme. By purchasing merchandise in the name of one victim and selling it in the name of another victim, defendants Anderton and Kirsch attempted to conceal and disguise their fraud activity from authorities. Using the accounts they created in other victims’ names, the defendants also offered for bid on eBay, merchandise that they did not possess, stealing money from unsuspecting buyers. The defendants opened bank accounts in victims’ names to deposit the proceeds from the eBay frauds and the convenience checks they wrote on the credit card accounts they had opened in other victims’ names. The defendants also moved funds within the fraudulent bank and PayPal accounts in an effort to distance themselves from the fraud. Likewise, in an attempt to conceal their identities from bank cameras, Anderton and Kirsch wore wigs, masks, and dark glasses when making thousands of dollars in cash withdrawals from the fraudulent accounts.

According to the information, over the course of one year, defendants Anderton and Kirsch used the identities of more than 16 victims in numerous illegal transactions to obtain at least \$119,381 in cash and merchandise. They also made failed attempts to obtain at least \$112,621 in additional cash and merchandise. The proceeds of their fraud scheme were used to help fund their lavish lifestyle that included trips to Florida, Paris, Hawaii, Montreal, and the Turks and Caicos Islands in the Caribbean.

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INFORMATION REGARDING THE DEFENDANTS

NAME	ADDRESS	AGE OR DATE OF BIRTH
Edward K. Anderton	Everett, WA	1982
Jocelyn Kirsch	Novato, CA	1985

If convicted of all charges, each defendant faces a maximum possible sentence of 69 years in prison.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the United States Postal Inspection Service, the Philadelphia Police Department, The University of Pennsylvania Police Department, and the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office. It is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Louis D. Lappen and Special Assistant United States Attorney Lisa Caulfield.

**UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
EASTERN DISTRICT, PENNSYLVANIA
Suite 1250, 615 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106**

**Contact: PATTY HARTMAN
Media Contact
215-861-8525**

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