



Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office
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SELLING COUNTERFEIT CISCO PARTS TO BUREAU OF PRISONS MEANS OWNER OF SYREN TECHNOLOGY WILL NOW SPEND TIME THERE

(HOUSTON) – Robert Edman 30, formerly of Richmond, Texas, has been sentenced to 30 months in federal prison for selling counterfeit Cisco products to the Bureau of Prisons (BOP), United States Attorney José Angel Moreno announced today.

At a sentencing hearing this morning, United States District Judge Vanessa Gilmore sentenced Edman to the prison term and also ordered that he serve a three-year-term of supervised release upon his release from prison. Judge Gilmore held Edman responsible for a loss amount of \$1,461,558 and in announcing the sentence stated that Edman's conduct caused "immeasurable harm to Cisco's brand name" and also harmed end users who thought they were obtaining genuine product. Edman pleaded guilty in September 2009 and will surrender to the Bureau of Prisons at a future date.

Cisco Systems is an American company that manufactures and sells computer hardware with an emphasis on hardware such as network cards that allows computers to network with other computers. According to public record in the case, Edman came to the attention of federal law enforcement in February 2006 when a customs officer at the Federal Express facility in Anchorage inspected a shipment from China addressed to Edman in Richmond. The shipment contained 1800 empty Cisco boxes and Cisco labels. In shipping counterfeit computer goods, it is a known practice to send the more valuable parts separately from the counterfeit packaging. That way, if the counterfeit packaging is discovered, as in this case, only that is seized and not the separately shipped, and more valuable, computer parts. Based on this inspection and other information, on Feb. 23, 2006, federal agents delivered a package of the empty Cisco boxes and labels to Edman and then executed a search warrant. Edman told agents he routinely purchased Cisco products from an individual in China who goes by the name "Tony." Tony is a known trafficker in counterfeit Cisco parts. Bank records subsequently obtained during this investigation revealed Edman had wired Tony approximately \$437,000.

Investigation further revealed Edman operated a business under the name Syren Technology and sold parts purporting to be genuine Cisco networking products either directly or through drop-shipping (a process in which an end user purchases products through a middleman who in turn filled the orders by purchasing the products from Syren) to various customers. Those customers included the Marine Corps, Air Force, FBI, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Energy, as well as defense contractors, universities, school districts and financial institutions. The count to which Edman pleaded guilty involved an August 2005 drop shipment of network cards to BOP. After the launch of the criminal investigation, the BOP was able to retrieve some of these network cards and Cisco engineers confirmed the cards were counterfeit.

The case was investigated by Immigration and Customs Enforcement Homeland Security Investigations with assistance from Customs and Border Protection and Cisco and prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Gregg Costa.

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