



U. S. Department of Justice
United States Attorney
Western District of Louisiana

For Immediate Release
December 9, 2010

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Stephanie A. Finley
United States Attorney
(337) 262-6618
mona.hardwick@usdoj.gov

**MER ROUGE MAN SENTENCED FOR HIS ROLE IN
MASSIVE DEBIT CARD AND IDENTITY THEFT SCHEME**

Criminal Ring Stole Over 2,000 Debit Card Account Numbers

Monroe, La. . . . Amon Rashad Peoples, 24, of Mer Rouge, La., was sentenced to a total of 111 months in prison for access devise fraud, aggravated identity theft, and attempted bank fraud, United States Attorney Stephanie A. Finley announced today. Peoples was ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$93,966.79 and was also sentenced to 5 years supervised release following the completion of his prison sentence. The sentence was imposed by Chief U. S. District Judge Robert G. James in Monroe.

According to court testimony, Peoples is responsible for fraudulently accessing over 2,000 different customer accounts involving over 60 financial institutions. Peoples and others at his direction made thousands of dollars in unauthorized charges through the use of counterfeit debit, credit, and gift cards that they manufactured.

From July 2005 to June 2009, Peoples and his co-conspirators fraudulently obtained debit and credit card numbers belonging to various individuals and transferred this information to counterfeit cards. Peoples was arrested after he attempted to purchase

individual bank account numbers from a Regions Bank employee, who notified law enforcement. The investigation further revealed that Peoples and other working with him transferred a portion of the money obtained during this scheme to other co-conspirators in China and Russia.

Five others previously pled guilty to federal charges in connection with this conspiracy: Tonyell T. Toliver, 36, of Monroe, La.; Shawna Batiste, 33 of Monroe, La.; Ben Simpson, 23, of Canton, Miss.; Demetricus Watson, 23, of Olive Branch, Miss.; and Dominique Flynn, 23, of Memphis, Tenn.

The case was investigated by Special Agent Darron N. Craft, U. S. Secret Service, Baton Rouge Resident Office, Special Agent Clint Cannon, U. S. Customs Service, and the Louisiana State Police. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U. S. Attorney Cytheria D. Jernigan.

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