

Department of Justice

United States Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr.
Western District of New York

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
SEPTEMBER 17, 2012
www.usdoj.gov/usao/nyw

CONTACT: BARBARA BURNS
PHONE: (716) 843-5817
FAX: (716) 551-3051

FLORIDA MAN PLEADS SENTENCED FOR IDENTITY THEFT

BUFFALO, N.Y.-- U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr. announced today that J'Melle Hooks, 26, of Cocoa, Florida, who was convicted of access device fraud and aggravated identity theft, was sentenced to 34 months in prison by District Judge Richard J. Arcara.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Maura K. O'Donnell, who handled the case, stated that the defendant was apprehended and searched at the Peace Bridge in September 2011, while attempting to enter Canada from the United States. Hooks was found to be in possession of stolen healthcare records containing personal identifying information for hundreds of individuals.

It was later discovered that tax returns were fraudulently filed using some of the identities listed in the medical records. Refunds issued by the IRS were automatically put onto debit cards. The defendant had six of these debit cards with him at the time of his arrest. Hooks used these credit cards in multiple locations in the United States in Canada to make purchases and obtain cash.

The sentencing is the culmination of an investigation on the part of Special Agents of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Homeland Security Investigations, under the direction of Special Agent in charge James Spero.

###