

# Department of Justice

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

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## **SECOND CALIFORNIA MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO COUNTERFEIT CHECK SCHEME**

BUFFALO, N.Y.--U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr. announced today that Robert Arron Shobert, 23, of Stockton, California, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Court Judge William M. Skretny to possessing counterfeit MoneyGram checks. The charge carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Paul J. Campana, who is handling the case, stated that Shobert passed counterfeit MoneyGram checks at Home Depot locations in Louisiana, Georgia, New Jersey, Massachusetts, New York and other states from late October 2011 until January 18, 2012.

Shobert and Michael John Grady, 55, also of Stockton California, inadvertently drove their car across the Rainbow Bridge towards Canada and were turned back on the Canadian side. Their vehicle was inspected on the U.S. side of the border by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Officers and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Agents. The officers and agents found unopened Home Depot merchandise such as locks and electrical and plumbing equipment, as well as 19 counterfeit MoneyGrams in \$500 and \$1,000 denominations. More than \$5,000 in cash also was seized from the car and will go towards restitution. Shobert used counterfeit checks to purchase merchandise and then returned merchandise for cash refunds. Some of the fraudulent transactions were caught on store video surveillance. The losses totaled approximately \$76,000.

Grady pleaded guilty before Judge Skretny on April 20 and will be sentenced on August 2, 2012 at 9:00 a.m.

The guilty plea is the result of an investigation by Special Agents of the Department

of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Homeland Security Investigations, under the direction of Special Agent In-Charge James C. Spero.

Sentencing is scheduled for August 15, 2012 at 9:00 a.m. before Judge Skretny. Shobert and Grady have been in custody since their arrest.