



NEWS RELEASE

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THREE SENTENCED FOR ROLES IN YEAR-LONG MAIL THEFT SCHEME INVOLVING OVER 500 VICTIMS

Anchorage, Alaska – U.S. Attorney Bryan Schroder announced that three Anchorage residents have been sentenced for their roles in an Anchorage mail theft scheme, which involved obtaining checks from the mail, and then negotiating the stolen checks at different banks using stolen identities and bank accounts.

The last of three defendants in this case, Ronald Travis Hecker, 36, of Anchorage, was sentenced today by U.S. District Judge Sharon L. Gleason to serve 3.5 years in prison, followed by 3 years of supervised release. In November 2018, Ronald Hecker pleaded guilty to conspiracy, bank fraud, aggravated identity theft, and possession of stolen mail. As part of his sentence, Ronald Hecker was ordered to pay approximately \$50,000 in restitution, joint and severally with his co-conspirators.

Ronald Hecker's co-conspirators were each sentenced in April 2019 for their roles in the conspiracy, after previously pleading guilty. Amber Hecker, 35, and leader of the conspiracy, was sentenced to serve 3.5 years in prison for conspiracy, bank fraud, aggravated identify theft, and possession of stolen mail. Richard Hoglin, 36, was sentenced to serve 2 years and 3 months in prison for bank fraud and aggravated identify theft.

According to court documents, from April 2017 to April 2018, Ronald Hecker conspired with his wife, Amber Hecker, along with Richard Hoglin, to steal mail and pass stolen checks with stolen identities at Alaska USA Federal Credit Union. They stole checks from the mail including convenience checks from Bank of America, Capital One, and Citibank. The stolen identities used by Ronald Hecker and his co-conspirators to pass the stolen checks came from committing vehicle break-ins, as well as backpack and purse snatching from places like Chuck E. Cheese and daycare centers. They would then falsely alter the stolen checks to deposit them in the accounts associated with the stolen identities and then make cash withdrawals. Specifically, the stolen checks were falsely made out to make the payee a separate stolen identity that was used by the defendants to negotiate the stolen checks.

After her husband's arrest, Amber Hecker recruited Hoglin to help steal mail and pass stolen checks with stolen identities at Alaska USA. Hoglin was involved in nine successful transactions in March 2018. He also assisted Amber Hecker in depositing \$9,425 in stolen and forged checks and withdrawing \$4,600 in cash.

In addition to the stolen identifications used in the approximately 88 fraudulent transactions during the course of the conspiracy, Ronald and Amber Hecker also had stolen identification information including social security cards, identification cards, and credit cards, of approximately 500 victims. This was the largest amount of victims impacted by a mail theft ring in Alaska. The investigation revealed that the total loss amount during the course of the conspiracy was \$81,342.

Judge Gleason noted that these kinds of crimes are very serious because they “destroy the sense of community” and erode trust.

The Anchorage Police Department (APD) and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service (USPIS), along with the Anchorage Airport Police, conducted the investigation leading to the successful prosecution of this case. This case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Aunnie Steward.

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