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MAN ARRESTED FOR STEALING IDENTITIES FROM INTERNET GAMBLING SITE FOR LARGE IDENTITY THEFT RING

MICHAEL J. GARCIA, United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and MARK J. MERSHON, Assistant Director-in-Charge of the New York Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI") announced that PATRICK KALONJI was arrested Sunday for his alleged participation in a large, Internet-based identity-theft ring. KALONJI, who was employed by an Internet gambling website, allegedly served as a source of stolen information for an identity-theft ring which was engaged in (among other things) stealing individual victims' personal identity information, sharing that information over the Internet with other members of the ring, and using the information to commit various forms of fraud. According to the Indictment unsealed today in Manhattan federal court:

KALONJI, at certain times relevant to the charges, resided in Costa Rica, where he was employed in the credit department of the Internet-based gambling web site known as BetOnSports.com. As part of the scheme, KALONJI and his co-conspirators stole the private identify information of at least 150 victims from the BetOnSports credit department and other sources. The stolen information included, in various cases, the victims' names, dates of birth, addresses, mothers' maiden names, social security numbers, telephone numbers, credit card numbers, and three-digit credit-card security codes. Co-conspirators then used the stolen credit card numbers and identity information to commit various forms of fraud, including using the credit card numbers to make purchases over the Internet.

KALONJI was arrested Sunday afternoon in Philadelphia, after arriving on a flight from Toronto, Ontario, Canada. KALONJI, 27, is a native of the Republic of the Congo and until his arrest, lived in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. He is charged with one count of conspiracy to commit bank and wire fraud and faces a maximum penalty of 30 years in prison and a fine of $1 million if convicted.

The case has been assigned to United States District Judge PAUL A. CROTTY, and the defendant will be arraigned later today before Magistrate Judge HENRY B. PITMAN.

Mr. GARCIA praised the investigative work of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and thanked the Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement for its assistance in this case.

The prosecution is being handled by the Office's Major Crimes and Computer Hacking/Intellectual Property Unit. Assistant United States Attorney MARCUS A. ASNER is in charge of the prosecution.

The charges contained in the Indictment are accusations and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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