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News Release

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Maple Grove man pleads guilty to wire fraud, identity theft

A 21-year-old Maple Grove man pleaded guilty today in federal court to one count of wire fraud and one count of aggravated identity theft in connection with a scheme to steal credit card account information and use it to add value to gift cards that he purchased.

Zachary Wiley Mann entered his plea June 27 before United States District Court Chief Judge James Rosenbaum in Minneapolis. Mann was charged June 16.

According to Mann's plea agreement, he devised a scheme to defraud and used the Internet to illegally obtain credit card account information from individuals and used that information without authorization for his own personal financial benefit from January 2008 to March 2008.

Mann obtained credit card account information from thousands of victims by "hacking" into an Internet-based order processing server, and used some of the stolen credit card numbers to add value to gift cards he purchased for small dollar amounts at restaurants. After he had used the stolen information to fraudulently inflate the value of the gift cards, he then placed ads for the cards on "Craigslist" and resold them.

Specifically, on Feb. 11 Mann for the purpose of executing the alleged scheme, connected via the Internet to the Panera Bread Web site, and did knowingly use, without lawful authority, a means of identification of another person.

According to the plea agreement, Mann committed these offenses while he was on supervised release in connection to a December 2006 conviction for conspiracy to commit computer fraud and aggravated identity theft in Florida.

Mann faces a potential maximum penalty of 20 years in prison on the wire fraud count and a mandatory minimum of two years on the identity theft count. Judge Rosenbaum will determine Mann's sentence at a future date.

This case is the result of an investigation by the U.S. Secret Service, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the police departments of Maple Grove and Shakopee, and is being prosecuted

by Assistant U.S. Attorney Timothy C. Rank.

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