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Department Of Justice
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Nineteen Individuals Indicted in Internet 'Carding' Conspiracy

Shadowcrew Organization Called 'One-Stop Online Marketplace for Identity Theft'

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Attorney General John Ashcroft, Assistant Attorney General Christopher A. Wray of the Criminal Division, U.S. Attorney Christopher Christie of the District of New Jersey and United States Secret Service Director W. Ralph Basham today announced the indictment of 19 individuals who are alleged to have founded, moderated and operated "www.shadowcrew.com" -- one of the largest illegal online centers for trafficking in stolen identity information and documents, as well as stolen credit and debit card numbers.

The 62-count indictment, returned by a federal grand jury in Newark, New Jersey today, alleges that the 19 individuals from across the United States and in several foreign countries conspired with others to operate "Shadowcrew," a website with approximately 4,000 members that was dedicated to facilitating malicious computer hacking and the dissemination of stolen credit card, debit card and bank account numbers and counterfeit identification documents, such as drivers' licenses, passports and Social Security cards. The indictment alleges a conspiracy to commit activity often referred to as "carding" -- the use of account numbers and counterfeit identity documents to complete identity theft and defraud banks and retailers.

The indictment is a result of a year-long investigation undertaken by the United States Secret Service, working in cooperation with the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of New Jersey, the Computer Crime and Intellectual Property Section of the Criminal Division of the Department of Justice, and other U.S. Attorneys' offices and law enforcement agencies. The undercover investigation led to the arrests of 21 individuals in the United States on criminal complaints earlier this week. Additionally, several individuals were arrested in foreign countries in coordination with the domestic arrests.

The indictment charges that the administrators, moderators, vendors and others involved with Shadowcrew conspired to provide stolen credit card numbers and identity documents through the Shadowcrew marketplace. The account numbers and other items were allegedly sold by approved vendors who had been granted permission to sell by operators and moderators of the Shadowcrew site after completing a review process. Shadowcrew members allegedly trafficked in at least 1.7 million stolen credit card numbers and caused total losses in excess of $4 million dollars. Victims of "carding" can include banks and credit card companies, which often suffer significant financial losses due to fraud, as well as individuals whose identities and credit histories are damaged by such identity theft.

"Identity theft carries a heavy price, both in the damage to individuals whose identities are stolen and the enormous cost to America's businesses," said Attorney General Ashcroft. "This indictment strikes at the heart of an organization that is alleged to have served as a one-stop marketplace for identity theft. The Department of Justice is committed to taking on those who deal in identity theft or fraud, whether they act online or off."

"Identity theft by organized groups like Shadowcrew is a particularly insidious crime," said Assistant Attorney General Wray. "Victims have their identities stolen and their credit ratings ruined. Identity theft defrauds banks and businesses of millions of dollars every year, endangering economic security and undermining consumer confidence. As today's indictment and the recent arrests in the Shadowcrew case demonstrate, the Department will use every available law enforcement tool to protect victims from this kind of criminal activity and to seek punishment for those responsible, wherever they are."

"These individuals operated a virtual trading post for stolen identity and financial information," U.S. Attorney Christie said. "They were international in their reach and we are pleased to say they are out of business. We look forward to hunting down and prosecuting more operators like them to spare consumers the nightmare of identify theft."

"Information is the world's new currency," said Secret Service Director W. Ralph Basham. "These suspects targeted the personal and financial information of ordinary citizens as well as the confidential and proprietary information of companies engaged in e-commerce."

The indictment alleges that Andrew Mantovani of Scottsdale, Arizona, David Appleyard of Linwood, New Jersey, and Anatoly Tyukanov of Moscow, Russia, conspired together and served as the administrators of the Shadowcrew website, controlled the direction of the organization, determined which individuals would be permitted to become members and moderators, and were responsible for the administration, maintenance and security of the servers upon which Shadowcrew was hosted. The indictment alleges that these individuals were responsible for creating and fostering the overall Shadowcrew marketplace.

The indictment further alleges that other Shadowcrew members, including Jeremy Stephens of Charlotte, North Carolina; Brandon L. Monchamp of Scottsdale, Arizona; Omar Dhanani of Fountain Valley, California; and Marcelo Del Mazo of Buenos Aires, Argentina conspired together, served as moderators for the website, and controlled the posting of information relating to credit card and identity theft.

Several of the individuals named above and additional members of Shadowcrew who were charged in the indictment are further alleged to have advertised and sold stolen credit card numbers, counterfeit identification documents and other merchandise, and to have provided the results of testing of illegal products offered by vendors on the Shadowcrew site.

The indictment charges one count of conspiracy encompassing numerous administrators, moderators and vendors on the Shadowcrew website. The other 61 counts of the indictment charge various members of the Shadowcrew organization with crimes including unlawful trafficking in stolen credit card numbers and other access devices, unlawful transfer of

identification documents to facilitate unlawful conduct, transferring false identification documents and unauthorized solicitation to offer access devices. The charges carry penalties, upon conviction, ranging from three to 15 years in prison.

Members of the public are reminded that the indictment contains only charges. A defendant is presumed innocent of the charges, and it will be the government's burden to prove a defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt at trial.

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