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Southern District of Texas
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ATTEMPT TO HACK HOUSTON ATMs NETS NORTH CAROLINA RESIDENT A PRISON TERM

(HOUSTON) - A 20-year-old computer hacker from North Carolina has been sentenced to prison for planning to hack into Houston area ATMs, United States Attorney José Angel Moreno announced today.

Thor Morris, 20, of Jacksonville, N.C., was sentenced to 37 months in federal prison without parole for fraud and related activity in connection with computers, a violation of 18 U.S.C. Sec. 1030(a)(4) and (b). Indicted in July 2010 for knowingly and with the intent to defraud attempting to access a protected automated teller machine without authorization to obtain money, Morris pleaded guilty to the federal felony offense in January 2011. Today, U.S. District Judge Vanessa Gilmore sentenced Morris to 37 months in federal prison without parole.

The charges against Morris came after an intensive computer intrusion investigation was initiated by FBI-Houston's Cyber Crimes Division in the early spring of 2010. Agents uncovered a scheme where Morris planned to travel to Houston to hack into approximately 35 ATMs located throughout the city in an attempt to embezzle more than $200,000. FBI Agents arrested Morris while in the act of attempting to gain unauthorized access into a storefront ATM machine on April 22, 2010.

Morris has been permitted to remain on bond pending the issuance of an order to surrender to a Board of Prisons facility to be designated in the near future.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Suzanne Elmilady and Craig Faezel prosecuted the case.

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