Department Of Justice
Western District of North Carolina
United States Attorney
Branch:Room 207, U.S.100 Otis Street
Asheville, North Carolina 28801(704) 271-4661
FAX (704) 271-4670
For further information Contact: Suellen W. Pierce (704) 338-3120
Headquarters:
Suite 1700, Carillon Building Courthouse
Charlotte, North Carolina 28202
(704) 344-6222
FAX (704) 344-6629

Hacker Sentenced to Prison for Breaking into Lowe's Companies' Computers with Intent to Steal Credit Card Information

CHARLOTTE, N.C. -- United States Attorney Gretchen C.F. Shappert and Kevin Kendrick, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI in North Carolina, announced that defendant BRIAN A. SALCEDO was sentenced on Wednesday, December 15, 2004, by United States District Judge Lacy Thornburgh for his role in a conspiracy to hack the nationwide computer system of the Lowe's Corporation. Defendant SALCEDO had previously pled guilty to participating in the conspiracy pursuant to a plea agreement with the Government.

According to the indictment in this case, from October 2003 through November 9, 2003, SALCEDO and his co-defendant conspired and schemed to gain unauthorized access to the nationwide computer system used by Lowe's and, after gaining access, to download and steal credit card account numbers from that computer system. In order to carry out this scheme, the defendants secretly compromised the wireless network at a Lowe's retail store in Southfield, Michigan, and thereby gained unauthorized access to Lowe's Companies, Inc.'s central computer system in North Wilkesboro, North Carolina and, ultimately, to computer systems located in Lowe's retail stores around the United States. Having gained this unauthorized access, the defendants then attempted to install and installed a computer program on the computer system of several Lowe's retail stores, which program was designed to capture the credit card information of customers conducting transactions with those stores.

Judge Thornburgh sentenced defendant SALEDO to 108 months imprisonment. It is believed that the longest federal prison sentence ever previously imposed for a computer hacking offense was the 68-month sentence imposed on notorious computer hacker Kevin Mitnick. (www.cybercrime.gov/cccases.html).

U.S. Attorney Shappert credits Special Agents Dorris Gardner and Gerard Senatore of the Federal Bureau of Investigation with leading the investigation that resulted in this conviction. The Government was represented in this matter by Assistant U.S. Attorney Matthew T. Martens of the U.S. Attorney's Criminal Division in Charlotte. Defendant SALCEDO was represented in this matter by Samuel A. Winthrop, Esq. of Statesville, North Carolina.