

NEWS RELEASE



OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

San Diego, California

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For Immediate Release

SAN DIEGO MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO INTERNATIONAL SCHEME INVOLVING DEBIT CARD FRAUD AND CONSPIRACY TO LAUNDER MONEY

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - March 2, 2009

San Diego - United States Attorney Karen P. Hewitt announced that Mikhail M. Tuknov, Jr. pleaded guilty today in federal court in San Diego to debit card fraud and conspiracy to launder money. Mr. Tuknov pleaded guilty to Counts 1 and 44 of the indictment which was handed up by a federal grand jury on October 22, 2008. As a consequence, he faces a maximum total sentence of up to 30 years in prison and up to \$750,000 in fines.

According to Assistant U. S. Attorney Mitch Dembin, who is prosecuting this case, Mr. Tuknov pleaded guilty to two counts of the indictment before United States District Judge John A. Houston. In connection with his guilty plea, Mr. Tuknov admitted that he obtained debit card numbers and associated personal identification numbers ("PINS") for bank accounts of actual persons from sources in Russia and distributed those numbers to an associate in the Dominican Republic. The associate then used the numbers

to encode blank debit card plastics and delivered them, by a variety of means, to other criminal associates in New York City. The New York City associates used the fake debit cards to fraudulently access the bank accounts tied to these cards at Automated Teller Machines and withdraw cash. The proceeds were sent by a variety of means to the Russian sources who paid Mr. Tuknov his commission and sent new numbers to him to generate more cash. Mr. Tuknov admitted that between August 2005 and March 2006, he moved approximately 1044 fraudulent debit card numbers and 1045 related PINS to his associates, resulting in losses to the issuing banks of approximately \$371,000.00.

This case was investigated by Special Agents assigned to the Cybercrime Squad of the San Diego Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigations.

Mr. Tuknov will be sentenced on May 26, 2009, at 10:30 a.m., by Judge Houston. The defendant has been in custody since his arrest on October 23, 2008.

DEFENDANT

Case Number: 08cr3663 - JAH

Mikhail M. Tuknov, Jr.

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Count 1: Title 18, United States Code, Section 1029(a)(2) and (b)(1) - Debit Card Fraud
Maximum Penalties: 10 years of imprisonment and \$250,000 fine

Count 44: Title 18, United States Code, Section 1956(h) - Conspiracy to Launder Money
Maximum Penalties: 20 years of imprisonment and \$500,000 fine

AGENCIES

Federal Bureau of Investigation
Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigations