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**United States  
Secret Service**

# Press Release

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## **U.S. SECRET SERVICE'S OPERATION OPEN MARKET NETS 19 ARRESTS Suspects Indicted for Racketeering, Identity Theft, Access Device Fraud**

**(Washington, D.C.)** The U.S. Secret Service, in coordination with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, arrested 19 individuals over the last two days in nine states in "Operation Open Market." This was an investigation into transnational organized crime which operated on multiple cyber platforms and whose members bought and sold stolen personal and financial information through online forums. The group then engaged in crimes such as identity theft and counterfeit credit card trafficking. This investigation is the first Secret Service cybercrime case to result in a Racketeer Influenced Corrupt Organization (RICO) indictment.

"The indictments and arrests in this case are yet another example of how the Secret Service continues to promote the Department of Homeland Security's mission of providing a safe, secure and resilient cyber environment. The successful partnerships fostered by the Secret Service's electronic crimes task forces result in ground-breaking investigations such as Operation Open Market," said A.T. Smith, the Secret Service's Assistant Director for Investigations.

U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement arrested two persons in Las Vegas yesterday, and another 17 persons in California, Florida, New York, Georgia, Michigan, Ohio, New Jersey and West Virginia. The individuals are charged in three separate indictments which were returned by the Grand Jury in Las Vegas in early 2012 and unsealed today. The charges include racketeering, conspiracy, and production and trafficking in false identification documents and access device cards.

Fifty persons are charged in the investigation. One indictment charges 39 defendants; however, the names of 16 of those defendants have been redacted and remain sealed because authorities have not yet arrested them, and 11 more are identified as John Doe and an alias. Another indictment charges seven individuals, and a third indictment charges four individuals.

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Authorities also executed a number of search warrants today at the known residences of several defendants and seized electronic media, counterfeit credit card manufacturing plants and an ATM machine.

“These suspects targeted the personal and financial information of ordinary citizens,” said Rick Shields, Special Agent in Charge of the Secret Service’s Las Vegas Field Office. “Working together with our partners in the Las Vegas Electronic Crimes Task Force, including Immigration and Customs Enforcement, we were able to build a comprehensive investigation based on information sharing, resource sharing and technical expertise that bridges jurisdictional boundaries.”

The defendants are alleged to be members and associates of a criminal organization who traffic in and manufacture stolen and counterfeit identification documents and access device cards (debit and credit cards), and engage in identity theft and financial fraud crimes. The organization encourages members to sell contraband, such as counterfeit documents and stolen bank account information by way of the organization’s websites. Higher level members of the organization examined and tested the products that other members wished to advertise and sell on its websites, and posted summaries of these reviews on the websites. Members of the organization used various procedures to mask their identities from law enforcement and to prevent detection from rival criminal organizations. Contraband available for purchase included money laundering services, fraudulent identification documents, stolen credit card account information or “dumps,” stolen PayPal accounts, and counterfeit plastic and counterfeit holograms used for producing counterfeit credit cards. The indictment states that “dumps” from the United States were the least expensive, and “dumps” from Europe, the Middle East and Asia were the most expensive.

The U.S. Secret Service has taken a lead role in mitigating the threat of financial crimes since the agency’s inception in 1865. As technology has evolved, the scope of the U.S. Secret Service’s mission has expanded from its original counterfeit currency investigations to also include emerging financial crimes. As a component agency within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the U.S. Secret Service has established successful partnerships in both the law enforcement and business communities – across the country and around the world – in order to effectively combat financial crimes.

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***EDITOR’S NOTE: For questions concerning this release, please contact the U.S. Secret Service Office of Government and Public Affairs at 202-406-5708.***