

Russian National Pleads Guilty to Running Online Criminal Marketplace

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Press Release

Thursday, January 23, 2020

For Immediate Release

Office of Public Affairs

A Russian national pleaded guilty today to charges related to his operation of two websites devoted to the facilitation of payment card fraud, computer hacking and other crimes.

Assistant Attorney General Brian A. Benczkowski of the Justice Department's Criminal Division, U.S. Attorney G. Zachary Terwilliger for the Eastern District of Virginia and Special Agent in Charge Matthew S. Miller of the U.S. Secret Service's Washington Field Office made the announcement.

Aleksei Burkov, 29, pleaded guilty before Senior U.S. District Judge T.S. Ellis III to access device fraud and conspiracy to commit computer intrusion, identity theft, wire and access device fraud and money laundering. Sentencing is scheduled for May 8, 2020.

According to court documents, Burkov ran a website called "Cardplanet" that sold payment card numbers (e.g., debit and credit cards) that had been stolen primarily through computer intrusions. Many of the cards offered for sale belonged to U.S. citizens. The stolen credit card data sold on Burkov's site has resulted in over \$20 million in fraudulent purchases made on U.S. credit cards.

Additionally, Burkov ran another website that served as an invite-only club where elite cybercriminals could advertise stolen goods, such as personal identifying information and malicious software, and criminal services, such as money laundering and hacking services. To obtain membership in Burkov's cybercrime forum, prospective members needed three existing members to "vouch" for their good reputation among

cybercriminals and to provide a sum of money, normally \$5,000, as insurance. These measures were designed to keep law enforcement from accessing Burkov's cybercrime forum and to ensure that members of the forum honored any deals made while conducting business on the forum.

Burkov was arrested at Ben-Gurion airport near Tel Aviv in December 2015. An Israeli district court approved his extradition in 2017. He was extradited to the United States from Israel on Nov. 11, 2019, after appeals to the Israeli Supreme Court and the Israeli High Court of Justice were denied.

Trial Attorney Laura Fong of the Criminal Division's Computer Crime and Intellectual Property Section and Assistant U.S. Attorneys Kellen S. Dwyer and Alexander P. Berrang of the Eastern District of Virginia are prosecuting the case.

The Office of International Affairs of the Justice Department's Criminal Division provided significant assistance in securing the defendant's extradition from Israel.

The year 2020 marks the 150th anniversary of the Department of Justice. Learn more about the history of our agency at www.Justice.gov/Celebrating150Years.

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Topics

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