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VENTURA COUNTY MAN SENTENCED TO NEARLY EIGHT YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON IN \$1 MILLION IDENTITY THEFT CASE

A Thousand Oaks man was sentenced today to 95 months in federal prison for orchestrating an identity theft scheme in which he used personal identifying information taken from dozens of mortgage and credit files to fraudulently obtain credit cards that were used to purchase more than \$1 million in goods and services.

Visanio Eugene Vann, 47, was sentenced this morning by United States District Judge S. James Otero in Los Angeles. In addition to the nearly eight-year prison term, Judge Otero ordered Vann to pay \$1,047,321 in restitution to eight banks that suffered losses during the course of Vann's nearly four-year-long scheme.

Vann pleaded guilty last November to three felony charges – mail fraud, use of unauthorized access devices (in this case, credit cards) and aggravated identity theft. Vann obtained personal identifying information and used the data to fraudulently obtain credit cards and checks from victim banks. Vann also fraudulently obtained driver's licenses, which allowed him to use the credit cards and checks. When authorities searched Vann's residence last year, they discovered mortgage files in the names of 145 people and 46 credit files that belonged to other people. In an attempt to conceal his activities, Vann maintained mail drops in Beverly Hills, where he had victim financial institutions send the fraudulently obtained credit cards and checks.

In issuing the 95-month prison sentence, Judge Otero considered Vann's lengthy criminal history, which includes fraud convictions that go back 25 years, and Vann's lavish lifestyle that included designer clothing, a Mercedes Benz CLK 430 convertible, high-end nightclubs and restaurants, and his \$1,400 purchase of a purebred puppy with a fraudulent credit card.

The case against Vann is part of an ongoing investigation being conducted by the Identity Theft and Economic Crime (ITEC) Task Force which is sponsored by the Los Angeles Division of the United States Postal Inspection Service. Members of ITEC include Postal Inspectors, and agents and detectives from the United States Secret Service, the Los Angeles Police Department, and the Los Angeles County Probation Department - Special Enforcement Operations Unit. ITEC was established in 2004 in response to increased complaints of identity theft in Southern California. Since its

inception, the ITEC Task Force has arrested more than 260 suspects, executed nearly 530 search warrants, and seized more than \$2.4 million in assets.

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