



08/01/2008

Mortgage applicant data stolen by Countrywide insider

A former Countrywide Financial Corp. employee and another man were arrested by the FBI on Friday in an alleged plot to steal and sell extremely sensitive information, including Social Security numbers, of up to 2 million mortgage applicants.

Experts have said the plot extended over a 2 year period through July and is thought to be one of the largest breaches in security in years.

The former Countrywide employee was identified as Rene L. Rebollo Jr. Rebollo Jr. worked as a senior financial analyst at Full Spectrum Lending, Countrywide's subprime lending division. He was charged with unauthorized access to a financial institution's computer and arrested at his home in Pasadena, CA.

Rebollo's suspected accomplice, Wahid Siddiqi, was arrested at his home in Thousand Oaks, CA under the suspicion of reselling Countrywide's data.

The LA Times reported that in an affidavit filed in federal court the FBI said Rebollo voluntarily described the plot in an affidavit filed in federal court. "Rebollo said he would charge \$400 or \$500 for batches of thousands of 'leads' -- personal and account information that presumably would help outside loan agents solicit new mortgages from the Countrywide applicants, some of whom had been denied loans by the Calabasas company."

In an affidavit by FBI Special Agent Richard P. Ryan, it stated that Rebollo would copy information on about 20,000 customers at a time on Sunday nights by using a Full Spectrum computer that did not have the same security features that other machines in the office had.

The US attorney's office said that the rate at which Rebollo transferred personal files would have compromised up 2 million customer profiles for about 2.5 cents each.