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## **Arraignment in Alleged Identity Theft Case**



**ALBANY, NY** – District Attorney P. David Soares announced today that ROBERT BRUST, 53, of Deerpark, New York, was arraigned on a sealed indictment charging (11) Counts of Identity Theft in the Second Degree, all Class E Felonies, and (1) Count of Scheme to Defraud in the First Degree, a Class E Felony, before the Honorable William A. Carter in Albany County Court yesterday afternoon.

A Grand Jury indictment was unsealed in Court this afternoon alleging that between the dates of May 5, 2015 and August 3, 2016, BRUST did knowingly engage in a scheme with the intent to defraud 11 persons to obtain property through false pretenses by presenting himself as and using the personal identifying information of these 11 persons.

The alleged scheme consisted of conduct by which BRUST engaged in identity theft to recover outstanding debts. It is alleged that BRUST, while employed as the manager of the collections arm of Long Island law firm Gutman, Mintz, Baker & Sonnenfeldt, engaged an employee of the firm to place multiple phone calls to the New York State Department of Tax & Finance and to the New York Health Exchange. On these calls, the employee allegedly impersonated the taxpayer or health account holder with the goal of illegally obtaining current employment information. Once that information was obtained, the law firm filed Income Executions on the individual's account and had their wages garnished to pay judgements related to outstanding tenant-landlord matters. During the period of time that this alleged scheme occurred, the Department of Taxation and Finance noticed a high volume of calls coming from the same individual. They conducted an investigation and uncovered that the calls were coming from an employee at the Gutman, Mintz, Baker & Sonnenfeldt Law Firm. It is alleged that BRUST directly benefited from this identity theft scheme through bonus payments paid by the firm.

BRUST pleaded not guilty to the charges yesterday and was released on his own recognizance. No new appearance dates have been scheduled at this time.

Assistant District Attorney Linda Griggs of the Financial Crimes Unit is handling the prosecution of this case.

For more information please contact Cecilia Walsh at (518) 275-4710 or [cecilia.walsh@albanycountyny.gov](mailto:cecilia.walsh@albanycountyny.gov)

***All parties are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty***

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