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**ROCKFORD MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO PARTICIPATING IN
FRAUD CONSPIRACY INVOLVING FALSE IDENTIFICATION DOCUMENTS**

ROCKFORD — A Rockford, Ill. man pled guilty today before U.S. District Judge Frederick J. Kapala in federal court to charges of fraud. **Mark Griffin**, 43, of Rockford, admitted that in June 2010, he possessed a document-making implement in a conspiracy to produce false identification documents.

According to the written plea agreement, Griffin conspired with Anthony Hardy, 41, also of Rockford, by possessing a laminating device to create false IDs to purchase and return merchandise sold by a large retail business with locations in most states. Griffin admitted that in June 2010 he and Hardy traveled from Rockford to Milwaukee to use counterfeit checks and IDs to purchase merchandise at a large retail business, then returned a few days later back to Rockford, with the device, intending to return the merchandise to stores operated by the same retail chain in the Rockford area and to use the device to create false IDs to use in their scheme. Specifically, Griffin admitted that on June 15, 2012, he attempted to obtain a cash refund for merchandise fraudulently obtained from a Wisconsin store of the same retail business.

The charge carries a maximum penalty of 5 years in prison, a \$250,000 fine, and mandatory restitution. The Court may also impose a fine totaling twice the loss to any victim or twice the gain

to the defendant, whichever is greater. The Court must impose a reasonable sentence under the advisory United States Sentencing Guidelines.

The entry of the plea agreement was announced by Gary S. Shapiro, Acting United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, and Thomas P. Brady, Inspector-in-Charge of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service in Chicago. The Rockford Police Department assisted in the investigation.

The government is being represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael D. Love.

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