# A California man is first to receive jail time for SIM hijacking scheme

Authorities say they believe that a California man is the first to receive jail time for enacting a SIM hijacking scheme, after pleading guilty to stealing more than $5 million in cryptocurrency.

*Motherboard* (via *Engadget*) reports that 20-year-old Joel Ortiz has been sentenced to 10 years in prison as part of a plea deal. He admitted to stealing information from around 40 people, allowing him to steal millions in cryptocurrencies. Authorities tell *Motherboard* that they hope that the sentence (he will formally be sentenced in March) and recent string of arrests sends "a strong message to that community," deterring others from similar practices.

SIM-swapping has been an increasingly popular method for thieves to steal sensitive data, like cryptocurrency or social media accounts. The practice involves someone transferring a phone number to a different SIM card, without the owner's approval. The thief will call a phone carrier and say that they lost their SIM card, and ask to get the number ported to another phone. If successful, they can can then take over their target's accounts by intercepting their two-factor authentication texts.

The practice can be lucrative for thieves: a Florida man was arrested for allegedly running a multi-state hacking ring last year, and a AT&T customer launched a lawsuit against the company, saying that he had more than $23 million in cryptocurrency stolen because of the practice.

https://www.theverge.com/2019/2/3/18209286/sim-hijacking-theft-california-man-jail-time-plea-deal-cryptocurrency