

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF CONNECTICUT

Grand Jury N-18-1

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Criminal No. 3:18cr 253(KAD)

v.

STIEVE FERNANDEZ,
HORACE CROOKS, and
MINIQUE MORRIS

VIOLATIONS:

18 U.S.C. § 1341
(Mail Fraud)

18 U.S.C. § 1343
(Wire Fraud)

18 U.S.C. § 1349
(Conspiracy to Commit Mail and Wire Fraud)

INDICTMENT

The Grand Jury charges:

COUNTS ONE AND TWO
(Mail Fraud)

The Scheme and Artifice to Defraud

1. From in or about January 2015 through the date of this Indictment, the exact dates being unknown to the Grand Jury, in the District of Connecticut and elsewhere, the defendants, STIEVE FERNANDEZ, HORACE CROOKS, and MINIQUE MORRIS (collectively, the “Defendants”), and others known and unknown to the Grand Jury, knowingly and with the specific intent to defraud, devised and participated in a scheme and artifice to defraud an elderly resident of Mystic, Connecticut (“Victim 1”), and to obtain money and property from Victim 1 by means of materially false and fraudulent pretenses, representations, and promises.

2. The object of the scheme and artifice to defraud was for the Defendants and their co-conspirators to enrich themselves by fraudulently convincing Victim 1 that he had won a lottery or

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sweepstakes and needed to make certain payments to the Defendants and their co-conspirators in order to collect the winnings.

3. During the course of the scheme and artifice to defraud, the Defendants and their co-conspirators fraudulently obtained hundreds of thousands of dollars from Victim 1, and did not disburse any lottery or sweepstakes winnings to Victim 1.

Manner and Means

4. It was part of the scheme and artifice to defraud that the Defendants and their co-conspirators took the following steps in the District of Connecticut and elsewhere.

5. The Defendants and their co-conspirators contacted and caused to be contacted Victim 1 by telephone, during which calls the caller falsely claimed that Victim 1 had won a lottery or sweepstakes. The caller used various pseudonyms to conceal his true identity, including “Damian Jackson,” “Jessie Jackson,” and “Huckleberry Finn.”

6. During the telephone calls with Victim 1, the Defendants and their co-conspirators falsely claimed that Victim 1 was required to pay certain fees in order to collect the winnings. These fees purportedly were to cover taxes, insurance, handling charges, and similar fees related to the winnings.

7. The Defendants and their co-conspirators directed Victim 1 to pay these fees in various ways, including by mailing checks and money orders to the Defendants and their co-conspirators, wiring funds to bank accounts controlled by the Defendants and their co-conspirators, and purchasing precious metals products (such as gold bars) for the benefit of the Defendants and their co-conspirators.

Executions of the Scheme

8. On or about the dates listed below, in the District of Connecticut and elsewhere, for the purpose of executing and attempting to execute the above-described scheme and artifice to defraud, the Defendants knowingly caused to be delivered through the United States mail the following documents, each constituting a separate count of this Indictment:

<u>Count</u>	<u>Date</u> <u>(on or about)</u>	<u>Description of Mailing</u>
1	5/18/2015	United States mail from Victim 1 to MORRIS containing six money orders in the total amount of approximately \$6,000
2	5/26/2015	United States mail from Victim 1 to MORRIS containing eight money orders in the total amount of approximately \$7,860

All in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1341.

COUNTS THREE THROUGH NINE
(Wire Fraud)

9. The allegations in Paragraphs 1 through 8 are realleged and incorporated as if fully stated herein.

10. On or about the dates listed below, in the District of Connecticut and elsewhere, for the purpose of executing the above-described scheme and artifice to defraud, FERNANDEZ, CROOKS, and MORRIS knowingly caused to be transmitted in interstate and foreign commerce by means of wire communications certain signs, signals, and sounds, each constituting a separate count of this Indictment, as follows:

<u>Count</u>	<u>Date</u> <u>(on or about)</u>	<u>Description of Interstate or Foreign Wire</u>
3	6/17/2015	Wire transfer in the approximate amount of \$20,000 from Victim 1 in Connecticut to CROOKS's JPMorgan Chase bank account outside of Connecticut ending in 8596
4	6/22/2015	Wire transfer in the approximate amount of \$20,000 from Victim 1 in Connecticut to CROOKS's JPMorgan Chase bank account outside of Connecticut ending in 8596

<u>Count</u>	<u>Date (on or about)</u>	<u>Description of Interstate or Foreign Wire</u>
5	8/26/2015	Wire transfer in the approximate amount of \$111,555 from Victim 1 in Connecticut to a precious metals dealer outside Connecticut for the purpose of purchasing three 1 kilogram gold bars
6	8/28/2015	Wire transfer in the approximate amount of \$275,000 from Victim 1 in Connecticut to a precious metals dealer outside Connecticut for the purpose of purchasing 11 gold bars of various weights
7	6/28/2016	Wire transfer in the approximate amount of \$68,013 from Victim 1 in Connecticut to a precious metals dealer outside Connecticut for the purpose of purchasing gold and silver bars of various weights
8	5/24/2018	Telephone call from Victim 1 in Connecticut to telephone outside Connecticut
9	5/28/2018	Telephone call from outside Connecticut to Victim 1 in Connecticut

All in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1343.

COUNT TEN
(Conspiracy to Commit Mail and Wire Fraud)

11. The allegations in Paragraphs 1 through 10 are realleged and incorporated as if fully stated herein.

12. From in or about January 2015 through the date of this Indictment, the exact dates unknown to the Grand Jury, in the District of Connecticut and elsewhere, FERNANDEZ, CROOKS, MORRIS, and others known and unknown to the Grand Jury, willfully and knowingly did combine, conspire, confederate, and agree with each other to commit mail and wire fraud as described in this Indictment, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1341 and 1343.

All in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1349.

FORFEITURE ALLEGATION

13. Upon conviction of one or more of the fraud offenses alleged in Counts One through Ten of this Indictment, each of FERNANDEZ, CROOKS, and MORRIS shall forfeit to the United States of America, pursuant to Title 18, United States Code, Section 981(a)(1)(C) and Title 28, United States Code, Section 2461(c), all right, title, and interest in any and all property, real or personal, which constitutes or is derived from proceeds traceable to such offense(s).

14. If any of the above-described forfeitable property, as a result of any act or omission of FERNANDEZ, CROOKS, or MORRIS, cannot be located upon the exercise of due diligence, has been transferred, sold to, or deposited with a third party, has been placed beyond the jurisdiction of the court, has been substantially diminished in value, or has been commingled with other property which cannot be divided without difficulty, it is the intent of the United States, pursuant to Title 21, United States Code, Section 853(p), as incorporated by Title 28, United States Code, Section 2461(c), to seek forfeiture of any other property of FERNANDEZ, CROOKS, or MORRIS up to the value of the forfeitable property described above.

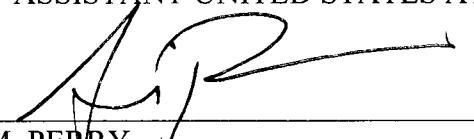
All in accordance with Title 18, United States Code, Section 981(a)(1), as incorporated by Title 28, United States Code, Section 2461(c), and Rule 32.2(a) of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure.

A TRUE BILL


FOREPERSON

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA


LEONARD C. BOYLE
FIRST ASSISTANT UNITED STATES ATTORNEY


AVI M. PERRY
ASSISTANT UNITED STATES ATTORNEY