

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF LOUISIANA

UNITED STATES	*	CRIMINAL ACTION NO. 18-168
v.	*	SECTION: E
ALEX SAUNDERS	*	
	*	
	*	

FACTUAL BASIS

The above-named defendant, **ALEX SAUNDERS (SAUNDERS)** has agreed to plead guilty as charged in the Bill of Information now pending against him. Should this matter have gone to trial, the United States of America would have proven beyond a reasonable doubt, through the introduction of relevant, competent, and admissible testimonial, physical and demonstrative evidence, the following facts to support the allegations against the defendant, **SAUNDERS**. Unless stated otherwise, all of the facts set forth herein occurred within the Eastern District of Louisiana.

COUNT ONE

(18 U.S.C. §371 - Conspiracy to commit mail and wire fraud)

The Lottery Scheme

During the period of time charged in the Bill of Information, **SAUNDERS** was a Jamaican national living in New Orleans, Louisiana and attending a University on an athletic scholarship. At a time unknown, but prior to August 2013 Andre O'Neil Bowyer,¹ a Jamaican national, recruited **SAUNDERS**, Debra Krom (Krom)² and others to participate in a lottery scam

¹ Bowyer is an indicted co-conspirator charged in *United States v. Bowyer*, 16-96 "J" in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana.

² Krom is an indicted co-conspirator charged in *United States v. Krom*, 18-30 "R" in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana.

based in Jamaica. The scheme operated where unknown persons from Jamaica, “callers,” would call elderly or mentally impaired victims living in the United States and tell them they had won the Publisher’s Clearing House (PCH) sweepstakes. In order to claim their PCH winnings, the callers told the victims they owed taxes or fees and needed to send money to **SAUNDERS**, Krom, and others, or else they could not claim their winnings. As part of the scheme, Bowyer directed **SAUNDERS**, Krom and others to open bank accounts in the United States. He informed them they would use these accounts to deposit money from the victims and later electronically transfer the money to Bowyer.

Also as part of the scheme to defraud the victims, Bowyer instructed **SAUNDERS**, Krom, and others to watch for packages of cash, certified checks, money orders, or preloaded credit cards from the victims. Bowyer would give these instructions over text message or WhatsApp shortly after the callers contacted the victim and directed the victim to send money to **SAUNDERS**, Krom, and others.

SAUNDERS, Krom and others received the funds, Bowyer instructed them to deposit the money into their bank accounts and send the money through an international wire transfer, Western Union, or Xoom to an account in Jamaica, owned and operated by Bowyer. On occasion, **SAUNDERS**, Krom and others would skim a portion of the money, usually ten percent, and keep it for themselves.

SAUNDERS was aware that the proceeds he received and later transferred to Bowyer were obtained by false and fraudulent pretenses and promises, and that he and Bowyer were not entitled to the funds.

Beginning at a time unknown but prior to in or around August 2013 and continuing to in or about December 2015, in the Eastern District of Louisiana and elsewhere, the defendant,

SAUNDERS, Krom and Bowyer, and others known and unknown to the United States Attorney, did knowingly and willfully combine, conspire, and agree to devise a scheme or artifice to defraud and obtain money by means of false or fraudulent pretenses, representations, or promises, in that **SAUNDERS**, Krom, Bowyer, together with others and for the purpose of executing a scheme and artifice to defraud, did knowingly cause elderly victims and victims with diminished mental capacities to send money by mail or by wire to **SAUNDERS**, Krom, and other co-conspirators.

The Bank Accounts

SAUNDERS maintained bank accounts in New Orleans, Louisiana, at Capital One, N.A. ending in 0398 and JPMorgan Chase ending in 7947.

Debra Krom maintained bank accounts in or near Wylie, Texas, at Capital One, N.A. ending in 8634, 2336, and 0123, JPMorgan Chase ending in 5228, and Bank of America ending in 3750.

Bowyer maintained bank accounts in Jamaica at the National Commercial Bank ending in 9321, Jamaica National Building Society ending in 0613, and Bank of Nova Scotia ending in 0316.

The Victims

- D.U. was an older individual, approximately 63 years old, residing in Doland, South Dakota.
- J.C. was an elderly individual, approximately 83 years old, residing in Tucson, Arizona.
- V.L. was an elderly individual, approximately 83 years old, residing in Fort Walton, Florida.

There were other victims of the lottery scheme who sent money to Bowyer via **SAUNDERS**, Debra Krom, and others.

Overt Acts

In furtherance of the conspiracy and to further the objectives of the conspiracy, the defendant, **SAUNDERS**, Debra Krom, Bowyer, and others known and unknown, committed the following overt acts:

Victim D.U.

On or about February 18, 2014, an unknown Jamaican co-conspirator phoned victim D.U. and told him that he had won the PCH sweepstakes but would need to pay taxes on the money in order to redeem his winnings.

Based on this information, on or about February 18, 2014, victim D.U. wired \$25,000 from his Wells Fargo bank account in Doland, South Dakota, to Debra Krom's Chase bank account ending in 5228.

On or about February 20, 2014, Debra Krom initiated an international wire transfer of \$25,235 to Bowyer's bank account at Bank of Nova Scotia, ending in 0316.

Victim J.C.

At a time unknown, but prior to November 22, 2014, J.C. received a phone call from an unknown number telling her that she had won a sweepstakes and needed to withdraw \$9,000 from her JPMorgan Chase account and electronically transfer it to **SAUNDERS's** JPMorgan Chase account in order to claim her winnings.

On or about November 24, 2014, the \$9,000 posted to **SAUNDERS's** JPMorgan Chase account ending in 0398. On that same date, **SAUNDERS** initiated an international wire transfer of \$8,060 to Bowyer's National Commercial Bank in Jamaica, ending in 9231.

Victim V.L.

At a time unknown, but prior to on or about March 30, 2015, Bowyer instructed **SAUNDERS** that victim V.L. would be sending \$3,500 in United States currency to **SAUNDERS's** address in New Orleans, Louisiana.

On or about March 30, 2015, an unknown individual calling from a Jamaican area code, instructed V.L. to mail United States currency through the United States mail containing a check payable to cash for approximately \$3,500 to **SAUNDERS's** address, in New Orleans, Louisiana. The caller informed victim V.L. that she had won the PCH sweepstakes and had to pay this amount to claim her winnings. Acting upon these instructions, V.L. mailed a check payable to cash for \$3,500 to **SAUNDERS's** address, in New Orleans, Louisiana.

On or about March 31, 2015, **SAUNDERS** received the package from V.L., containing approximately \$3,500 in cash.

On or about March 31, 2015, **SAUNDERS** deposited approximately \$5,700 into a Capital One, N.A. checking account ending in 7947.

On or about April 1, 2015, **SAUNDERS** initiated an international wire transfer of approximately \$5,700 to a Jamaican National Building Society bank account in Jamaica ending in 0613, belonging to Bowyer.

At a time unknown but prior to on or about April 3, 2015, an unknown individual calling from a Jamaican area code, informed victim V.L. that she had to send additional money to **SAUNDERS** to claim her winnings. On or about April 3, 2015, the Okaloosa County Sheriff's

office and the United States Secret Service (USSS) prevented V.L. from sending \$6,000 to **SAUNDERS**. Instead, USSS contacted the United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS) and the United States Department of Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) and coordinated a controlled delivery of a U.S. mail package appearing to contain the \$6,000 that V.L. previously agreed to send **SAUNDERS**. At approximately 2:30 pm on April 3, 2015, an undercover USPIS agent arrived at **SAUNDERS**'s address and knocked on the door to deliver the package. An individual, later identified as Alex **SAUNDERS**, signed for and took the package. The agents asked **SAUNDERS** if he would agree to answer questions about the package.

SAUNDERS agreed, and signed a form allowing agents to conduct a search of his apartment and property. In a written statement, **SAUNDERS** admitted that he knew Bowyer for five years and that Bowyer sent him cards with money on them and that he would send the cards back to Bowyer via money gram or Western Union with amounts ranging from \$4,200-\$6,400. **SAUNDERS** admitted that he knew what he was doing was illegal and involved a lottery scam where elderly individuals were duped into sending him and Bowyer money. When agents interviewed **SAUNDERS**, he was in possession of the following visa debit cards: four in the name of P.H., one in the name of J.H., two in the name of Jy. H., three in the name of S.M., and two in the name of S.F. **SAUNDERS** also allowed agents to take screen shots of text messages between **SAUNDERS** and Bowyer where Bowyer directed **SAUNDERS** to send money to him and advised him that money would be arriving from certain individuals.

On or about April 9, 2015, **SAUNDERS** deposited approximately \$3,880 in cash into his Capital One Bank account ending in 7947.

On or about April 9, 2015, **SAUNDERS** initiated an international wire transfer of approximately \$5,540 to a Jamaican National Building Society bank account in Jamaica ending in 0613, belonging to Bowyer.

Other victims include:

M.K., 79 years old, who wrote a personal check to **SAUNDERS** on September 2, 2014, in the amount of \$1,000. **SAUNDERS** deposited this into his JPMorgan Chase account, ending in 0398 on September 2, 2014. **SAUNDERS** later transferred more than \$1,900 to Bowyer's National Commercial Bank in Kingston, Jamaica on September 2, 2014.

M.D., 78 years old, who wrote a check to **SAUNDERS** on October 3, 2014 in the amount of \$4,000. **SAUNDERS** deposited this into his JPMorgan Chase account, ending in 0398 on November 10, 2014. **SAUNDERS** later transferred \$7,650 to Bowyer's National Commercial Bank in Kingston, Jamaica on November 17, 2014.

R.S., 70 years old, who wrote a cashier's checks to **SAUNDERS** on December 4, 2014, in the amount of \$2,400 and December 9, 2014, in the amount of \$2,000. **SAUNDERS** deposited these checks into his JPMorgan Chase account, ending in 0398 on December 8 and 9, 2014. **SAUNDERS** later transferred approximately \$4300 to Bowyer's National Commercial Bank in Kingston, Jamaica on December 8 and 9, 2014.

B.D., 63 years old, who wrote a cashier's check in the amount of \$8,000 to **SAUNDERS**, who deposited the proceeds into his JPMorgan Chase account ending in 0398, on December 18, 2014. **SAUNDERS** later transferred more than \$9,000 to Bowyer's National Commercial Bank in Kingston, Jamaica on December 23, 2014 and December 30, 2014.


Total Losses

In total, from August 2013 through December 2015, Debra Krom transferred \$165,043 of illegal proceeds to Bowyer's accounts in Jamaica.

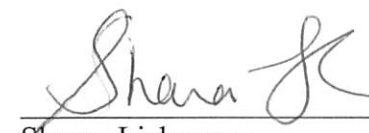
In total, from August 2013 through December 2015, **SAUNDERS** transferred \$152,042.76 of illegal proceeds to Bowyer's accounts in Jamaica.

The defendant, **ALEX SAUNDERS**, acknowledges and agreed that the above facts are true and correct and that he knowingly and intentionally committed the acts described above and that this factual basis does not include all of the facts known to **SAUNDERS** or the government but alleges sufficient facts to establish the elements of the crime, conspiracy to commit mail and wire fraud.

READ AND APPROVED:


Counsel for Defendant
WAYNE MANCUSO

10/24/18
DATE


Sharan Lieberman
Assistant United States Attorney

10/24/18
DATE


ALEX SAUNDERS
Defendant

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DATE