

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	:	CRIMINAL NO. 24-
v.	:	DATE FILED: October 17, 2024
ANTONIO BLAKENEY	:	VIOLATION:
	:	18 U.S.C. § 1349 (conspiracy to commit wire fraud – 1 count)

INFORMATION

COUNT ONE

THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY CHARGES THAT:

INTRODUCTION

At all times relevant to this information:

1. Defendant ANTONIO BLAKENEY, a resident of Florida, was a former basketball player in the National Collegiate Athletics Association (“NCAA”) and National Basketball Association (“NBA”). He was also a basketball player for two different teams in the Chinese Basketball Association (“CBA”).

2. An individual known to the United States Attorney as “Person A” was a resident of Mississippi.

3. An individual known to the United States Attorney as “Person B” was a resident of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and elsewhere.

4. An individual known to the United States Attorney as “Person C” was a resident of North Carolina.

5. An individual known to the United States Attorney as “Person D” was a

resident of Mississippi and elsewhere.

THE CONSPIRACY

6. From in or about September 2022 to in or about September 2024, in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, and elsewhere, defendant

ANTONIO BLAKENEY

conspired and agreed with Person A, Person B, Person C, and Person D, and others known and unknown to the United States Attorney (collectively, “co-conspirators”), to commit wire fraud, that is, to devise and intend to devise a scheme to defraud casinos, sports betting companies, and other companies and individuals, and to obtain money and property, specifically, United States currency in the form of sports betting proceeds, by means of false and fraudulent pretenses, representations, and promises, in furtherance of which scheme defendant BLAKENEY and the co-conspirators caused to be transmitted writings, signs, signals, pictures, and sounds by wire communications in interstate and foreign commerce, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1343.

MANNER AND MEANS

It was part of the conspiracy that:

7. During both the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 CBA seasons, defendant ANTONIO BLAKENEY conspired with Person A and Person B to affect the outcomes of CBA games in which defendant BLAKENEY was a participant. Specifically, defendant BLAKENEY, Person A, and Person B agreed that BLAKENEY would receive payments (bribes) in exchange for affecting the outcomes of CBA games through BLAKENEY’s intentionally poor performances, sitting out of games, and/or removing himself from games.

8. Further, defendant ANTONIO BLAKENEY recruited other U.S. citizen basketball players in the CBA into the conspiracy by offering them payments (bribes) in exchange for (a) affecting the outcomes of CBA games through their intentionally poor performances, sitting out of games, and/or removing themselves from games; and (b) material, non-public information about the health and playing status of CBA players.

9. Defendant ANTONIO BLAKENEY then provided Person A and Person B with material, non-public information about the health, playing status, and/or anticipated poor performances of defendant BLAKENEY and other basketball players in the CBA. To provide this information, defendant BLAKENEY communicated via cell phone – both while he was in the United States, including the state of Florida, and while he was in China – with Person A and Person B. Some of these communications between defendant BLAKENEY and Person B occurred while Person B was in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

10. After receiving the above-described information from defendant ANTONIO BLAKENEY, Person A, Person B, and other co-conspirators placed bets on CBA games for which (a) defendant BLAKENEY and other U.S. citizen basketball players in the CBA had agreed to affect the outcome of CBA games through their intentionally poor performances, sitting out of games, and/or removing themselves from games; and (b) BLAKENEY had previously provided material, non-public information about his and other players' health and playing status in the CBA. These bets were placed on various online betting platforms and at in-person sports betting locations at casinos, including at Casino 1 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. As a result, many of these placed bets caused to be transmitted from the Eastern District of Pennsylvania to computer servers located outside of Pennsylvania, by

means of wire communication in interstate and foreign commerce, writings, signs, signals, pictures, and sounds.

11. Defendant ANTONIO BLAKENEY and other U.S. citizen basketball players in the CBA then affected the outcome of their games through intentionally poor performances, sitting out of games, and/or removing themselves from games. After the above-described placed bets succeeded, Person A and Person B obtained the betting proceeds and sent payments to the individuals they had previously bribed, including defendant ANTONIO BLAKENEY and other U.S. citizen basketball players in the CBA. Person A and Person B used wire transfers, electronic banking applications, and the United States mail to send payments to defendant BLAKENEY and other U.S. citizen basketball players in the CBA.

12. After the success of the CBA portion of the conspiracy during the 2022-2023 season, defendant ANTONIO BLAKENEY and multiple co-conspirators conspired to affect the outcomes of college basketball games during the 2023-2024 NCAA season. Specifically, Person A, Person C, and Person D identified and recruited susceptible NCAA players into the conspiracy. Person A, Person C, and Person D contacted these NCAA players and offered them payments (bribes) – usually ranging from \$10,000 to \$20,000 – in exchange for (a) affecting the outcomes of NCAA games through their intentionally poor performances, sitting out of games, and/or removing themselves from games; and (b) material, non-public information about the health and playing status of NCAA players.

13. After Person A, Person C, and Person D contacted NCAA players, they utilized defendant ANTONIO BLAKENEY to convince the NCAA players to participate in the conspiracy. Specifically, defendant BLAKENEY convinced the NCAA players that Person A,

Person C, and/or Person D would actually pay the players the agreed bribe amounts. Typically, defendant BLAKENEY spoke to the NCAA players via the FaceTime application with Person A and/or Person D. On at least one occasion, multiple members of an NCAA team traveled to Person A's home and Person A called defendant BLAKENEY via FaceTime to discuss fixing NCAA games with those team members. During this period, Person D moved to Person A's home in order to further the conspiracy.

14. Person A, Person B, Person D, and other co-conspirators then placed bets on online sports book applications and in-person at casinos on NCAA games for which (a) the bribed NCAA players had agreed to affect the outcome of NCAA games through their intentionally poor performances, sitting out of games, and/or removing themselves from games; and (b) the bribed NCAA players provided material, non-public information about players' health and playing status in college basketball games. The bribed NCAA players then affected the outcome of their college basketball games through their intentionally poor performances, sitting out of games, and/or removing themselves from games.

15. Once these placed bets on NCAA games succeeded, Person A paid defendant ANTONIO BLAKENEY a portion of the betting proceeds. Meanwhile, Person C and Person D traveled to NCAA school campuses and paid the bribed players their agreed bribes in cash.

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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jac Di / Por", is written over a horizontal line.

JACQUELINE C. ROMERO
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY