IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE
EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA
Richmond Division

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA v. PRADIPSINH DHARMENDRASINH PARMAR, Defendant.	No. 3:19-CR-160

STATEMENT OF FACTS

The United States and the defendant agree and stipulate that the allegations in the Second Superseding Indictment and the following facts are true and correct, and that had the matter gone to trial the United States would have proven them beyond a reasonable doubt, by competent and admissible evidence.

1. Beginning in or about at least May 2016, the exact date being unknown, and continuing through in or about at least October 2019, in the Eastern District of Virginia and within the jurisdiction of this Court, as well as elsewhere, defendant PRADIPSINH DHARMENDRASINH PARMAR knowingly conspired with co-defendants Chirag Janakbhai Choksi ("Choksi"), Shachi Naishadh Majmudar ("Majmudar"), Shehzadkhan Khandadkhan Pathan ("Pathan"), Sumer Kantilal Patel ("Patel"), Jayeshkumar Prabhudas Deliwala ("Deliwala"), K.P., and others, both known and unknown, to execute and attempt to execute a scheme and artifice to defraud and to obtain property by means of materially false and fraudulent pretenses, representations, and promises, and for the purpose of executing that scheme and artifice to defraud: (a) delivered and caused the delivery of matter by private and commercial

interstate carriers; and (b) transmitted and caused to be transmitted writings, signs, and signals in interstate and foreign commerce.

2. The purpose of this conspiracy was to defraud victims of money through various means, which money conspirators used to unlawfully enrich themselves. To accomplish this, members of the conspiracy contacted unsuspecting victims by phone—both directly and through automated, previously recorded calls, commonly referred to as "robocalls" containing messages designed to create a sense of urgency. These calls caused transmissions of information via interstate and foreign wires.

3. Contact with victims typically started through the use of automated, previously recorded calls, commonly referred to as "robocalls." These robocalls usually contained messages designed to create a sense of urgency with the call recipient, and included instructions for next steps the victim was to take. Their messages typically told recipients that they had some sort of serious legal problem, usually criminal in nature, and that if they did not act immediately in accordance with the demands of the callers, then there would be drastic consequences. These consequences included threats of arrest and/or significant financial penalties. Recipients would be instructed to hold the line or call back a particular number to speak with someone about the serious matter. Eventually victims would end up speaking with one or more live persons during the course of their particular schemes who persuaded the victims to send money. These live persons who persuaded victims to send money were referred to within the conspiracy as "closers." Closers used a variety of scripts incorporating different fraud schemes to mislead victims. Three such scripts that were representative, though certainly not all-inclusive, of those used by the instant conspiracy are described below.

4. One frequently used script involved conspirators impersonating an official with a law enforcement agency, such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI") or the Drug Enforcement Administration ("DEA"). Closers using these scripts would convince victims that they were the subjects of criminal investigations, often involving the prospective seizure of all of the victims' financial assets. Victims would be persuaded, coerced and cajoled to ship packages of cash or preloaded payment cards to addresses that were supposedly official government receiving addresses. This, the victims were told, would help them avoid immediate drastic consequences that included arrest and criminal prosecution. Victims were promised that the money would be returned to them, sometimes with interest, if they were ultimately cleared of wrongdoing.

5. A variation on the above script used by closers was to falsely claim to be acting on behalf of a federal agency like the Social Security Administration regarding benefits the victims were entitled to receive, or the Internal Revenue Service regarding potential tax penalties. Here again victims were persuaded or coerced to send packages of cash and/or preloaded payment cards, or to wire funds, as directed by their closers. The victims were told that their moneys would be used to restore funds that had been depleted for one reason or another from their benefits accounts, or would be used to pay tax bills.

6. A third frequently-used script involved telling victims that they had been approved for loans. Conspirators would then discuss the purported terms of the loan with the victims. Victims were told that to finalize their loans they needed to send a payment representing earnest money or an initial loan installment by money transfer, specifically Western Union, MoneyGram or Walmart2Walmart money transfers. The typical amounts for such money transfers ranged from several hundred dollars up to three thousand dollars.

7. The conspiracy operated through foreign call centers located primarily in India and disproportionately victimized elder Americans. Among others, the conspiracy targeted elder victims located in Virginia, Nevada, Ohio, Washington, Kansas, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Texas, and Pennsylvania. To conceal the international origins of the above-described calls, conspirators established multiple cells within the United States to which victims were directed to send cash payments. Among other states, these cells operated in Virginia, Minnesota, New Jersey, California, Indiana, Texas, and Illinois.

8. Conspirators instructed victims to send bulk cash through various means, including via the U.S. Postal Service ("USPS") and private, interstate commercial carriers, such as FedEx and UPS. For physical cash shipments, conspirators directed victims to use shipping methods that provided tracking numbers, which numbers conspirators instructed victims to provide to various conspiracy members. Conspirators also instructed victims to send cash payments via money transfer services, including Western Union, MoneyGram or Walmart2Walmart.

9. Once a victim mailed, shipped, or transferred a cash payment and provided the resulting tracking or transfer number as directed, conspirators transmitted those numbers among themselves through various means, including electronic communications over interstate and foreign wires. Ultimately, conspirators provided the tracking and transfer numbers to members of the conspiracy operating within the geographical area encompassing the address to which the victim had shipped or wired the associated cash payment. These conspirators, commonly referred to as "money mules," would use the tracking numbers to electronically track the incoming physical shipments through online inquiries conducted on the carrier's website. These inquiries resulted in the transmission of information via interstate wire from and to the devices

that conspirators used to conduct them to, through, and from carrier servers located in various states. Similarly, the victims' electronic transfers of funds also resulted in the transmission of information via interstate wire from, to, and through computers and servers belonging to the money transfer services used to conduct those transfers.

10. When a victim package arrived at the specified address, a money mule conspirator would receive or retrieve the package from that address. When required, the money mule used a counterfeit identification document incorporating a stolen or fictitious identity alongside the conspirator's picture to retrieve the package, which conspirators had directed victims to address to the same stolen or fictitious identity. Similarly, when a victim's electronic cash transfer was completed, a money mule conspirator picked up the funds at money servicing businesses, including Western Union, MoneyGram and Walmart, using either a designated code word provided by the victim or a counterfeit identification document incorporating a stolen or fictitious identity to whom conspirators had directed the victim to transfer the money alongside the conspirator's picture.

11. After retrieving victim cash shipments and transfers in this way, the money mule conspirators would then transport those packages and transfer proceeds to another location and, once there, remove and count the bulk cash, a security measure required by their handlers. These conspirators often used electronic devices, including cell phones, to film themselves removing and counting currency. They frequently sent these videos via electronic communications over interstate and foreign wires to other conspirators in order to verify the amount of money contained in each victim shipment or transfer. After verifying each shipment in this way, the money mule conspirators would remove a portion of the cash proceeds—which they retained as payment for themselves—and then transmit the remaining amount to other conspirators as

directed. Specifically, the money mule conspirators would deposit the remaining amount into bank accounts opened by and/or accessible to other conspiracy members at various financial institutions, including Wells Fargo and Bank of America. Members of the conspiracy then used these accounts to access and disburse the deposited funds. Money mule conspirators would also use informal money transfer services, known as Hawalas, to transmit funds to other conspirators as directed.

12. At all times relevant to the conspiracy, defendant was a citizen of Ahmedabad, India. On or about May 16, 2016, defendant traveled to the United States on a B2 visitor's visa that permitted him to remain in the country until November 15, 2016. Once in the United States, defendant began to work as a money mule for the instant conspiracy and continued to do so until at least October 2019.

13. As a money mule, defendant worked with Pathan, K.P., and others to create and receive counterfeit identification documents bearing defendant's photograph and descriptors alongside the government identification numbers of real people and the aliases to whom conspirators directed victims to send cash shipments and money transfers. Defendant received these fake IDs through various means, including FedEx shipments to addresses in several states, and used the fake IDs to receive and collect victim cash shipments and money transfers in furtherance of this conspiracy, as directed by Pathan, K.P., and others. In total, defendant conspired with Pathan and others to produce and receive at least 549 counterfeit identification documents in furtherance of the conspiracy.

14. Between at least March 31, 2017 and April 1, 2019, defendant, working with Pathan, K.P., and others, used designated code words and/or counterfeit identification documents to collect at least 4,358 money transfers orders totaling at least $4,312,585.50 at money

servicers, including Western Union, MoneyGram, and Walmart, located in at least 30 states. Defendant used counterfeit identification documents bearing his photograph alongside fictitious and stolen identities when required to receive these money transfers. For example, with respect to Count Eight of the Second Superseding Indictment, on December 19, 2018, defendant possessed and used without lawful authority a counterfeit Pennsylvania driver's license bearing his photograph and a fictitious name alongside Pennsylvania driver's license number 23 359 534, which is the true license number for an individual identified as M.C.P., who is a resident of Nazareth, Pennsylvania. Specifically, defendant presented this counterfeit identification at a Walmart in Thomasville, North Carolina when picking up an $820 MoneyGram transfer sent by a resident of Newport News, Virginia.

15. In addition to these money transfers, between at least January 2019 and October 2019, defendant, working with Pathan, K.P., and others, also received and attempted to receive at least 91 FedEx, UPS, or USPS shipments at addresses in at least two states, which shipments contained at least $1,593,591.77 in cash.

16. Defendant transferred the majority of the money he received and collected to other conspirators by depositing it into bank accounts at various financial institutions and giving it directly to various Hawalas. With respect to the bank deposits, between at least March 31, 2017 and March 27, 2019, defendant deposited $4,096,489.00 into at least 524 business and personal bank accounts in at least 806 separate transactions conducted in at least 29 states. Defendant retained a portion of the funds, approximately 8% of each money transfer and 2% to 7% of each cash shipment, for his participation in the instant conspiracy.

17. A warrant was obtained for defendant's arrest on February 26, 2020 after a U.S. magistrate judge in the Eastern District of Virginia found probable cause to believe that

defendant had conspired to commit mail and wire fraud, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1349, and had also committed and aided and abetted mail fraud, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 1341 and 2.

18. Defendant was arrested on March 4, 2020 in Chester, Virginia while operating a 2016 Hyundai Santa Fe Sport 2.0T. The owner of that vehicle confirmed that defendant had maintained exclusive possession of it since at least March 2019, when defendant agreed to assume making the monthly payments. The vehicle had approximately 35,000 miles on it when defendant took possession of it. At the time of his arrest approximately one year later, the vehicle had approximately 113,000 miles on it. Defendant used the vehicle to travel to various locations to receive victim money transfers and cash shipments in furtherance of the conspiracy, often photographing and videoing himself inside the vehicle driving to various locations, obtaining and opening packages, and counting money. Defendant sent these photographs and videos via WhatsApp messages to Pathan, K.P., and others to verify his successful receipt of the victim funds these individuals had instructed him via WhatsApp messages to collect.

19. A search of the Hyundai Santa Fe incident to defendant's arrest recovered a silver Emporio Armani watch; various receipts and documents, including documents and envelopes from Western Union and MoneyGram; and a black accordion folder containing paperwork related to defendant's planned purchase of Harrowgate Market Place in Chester, Virginia from J.G. and S.K.G. through a third party intermediary for approximately $65,000 to $70,000. With those documents, investigators recovered a cashier's check made out to SHREE MANDAVRAY JI LLC for $50,500.00, as well as $500 in cash. A search of defendant's person incident to arrest also recovered $2,316.34 in cash, various business cards, and multiple lottery tickets. Shortly after defendant's arrest, investigators recovered from J.G. and S.K.G. an additional $20,000 in cash that defendant had given them as a down payment for defendant's intended purchase of

Harrowgate Market Place. Defendant now acknowledges and admits that all of the money recovered on March 4, 2020 represents proceeds that he personally received from his participation in this conspiracy.

20. Following his arrest, defendant waived his rights and agreed to speak with investigators. In sum and substance, defendant admitted his involvement in the instant conspiracy, stating that he agreed to serve as a money mule for Pathan, K.P., and others after traveling to the United States following the downturn of his real estate business in India. Defendant admitted working as a money mule for these conspirators between 2016 and 2019. Defendant further admitted that he knew he was receiving money from people who were being targeted by India-based call centers in the manner described herein. Defendant was familiar with how the call centers worked and identified Pathan as the owner of one such call center where, according to defendant, Pathan and others worked as closers, that is, the people who spoke with responsive victims and convinced them to send money through money transfers and physical cash shipments.

21. Defendant admitted receiving transfer instructions and FedEx tracking numbers from Pathan, K.P., and others with directions on where and how to collect the associated transfers and shipments. According to defendant, the frequency with which he received victim money transfers and shipments varied. For example, in 2016, defendant received incoming victim money transfers in amounts ranging from $500 to $2,000 three to four times per day, every day, for approximately three to five months. In 2017, defendant recalled receiving such money transfers two to four times per day, every day, for approximately 10 months. Thereafter, defendant stated that he only received victim money transfers once or twice per week until the

beginning of 2018, when he began receiving such transfers three to four days per week through the end of the year.

22. Defendant stated that he first started receiving victim cash shipments at the end of 2018 and continued to receive those shipments through at least October 2019. Defendant stated that he received packages at addresses provided to him by Pathan, K.P., and others; but, over time, that he also identified addresses to which conspirators could direct victim cash shipments. Defendant acknowledged using code words and, later, counterfeit identification documents to receive victim money transfers and cash shipments. Defendant estimated that he had received 10 to 13 FedEx shipments from Pathan, each containing approximately 20 to 50 counterfeit identification documents. Defendant said that he used each ID once or twice and then destroyed it, all as directed by Pathan. Defendant estimated that he received between 2% and 8% of the money he collected as payment for his role in these activities.

23. Defendant consented to a search of the cellular telephones recovered during his arrest. Such phones included contact information for Pathan, K.P., and others, along with eight videos of defendant or others opening victim packages and counting the cash inside. Specifically, the collective amount counted in those videos totaled $152,000.

24. Defendant admits that between in or about at least May 2016 through in or about at least October 2019, he knowingly and intentionally conspired with Choksi, Majmudar, Pathan, Parmar, Patel, Deliwala, K.P., and others to execute and attempt to execute a scheme to defraud and to obtain property by means of materially false and fraudulent pretenses, representations, and promises; that, for the purpose of executing the scheme and artifice to defraud, conspirators delivered and caused the delivery of matter by private and commercial interstate carriers and transmitted and caused to be transmitted writings, signs, and signals in interstate and foreign

commerce; and that, in furtherance of this conspiracy, he knowingly committed, aided, abetted, induced, counseled, and encouraged the acts described herein with the specific intent to defraud.

25. Defendant further acknowledges that the automated and live-person calls placed by conspiracy members to victims were wire transmissions that passed in interstate and foreign commerce, thus satisfying the jurisdictional element for wire fraud, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1343. The transfer of funds by victims through the use of Western Union, MoneyGram and Walmart2Walmart money transfers were also wire transmissions passing in interstate and foreign commerce. The conspirators' persuading and causing victims to send parcels of cash via the commercial carriers FedEx and UPS, along with the USPS, were mailings that satisfied the jurisdictional element for mail fraud, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1341.

26. The defendant acknowledges that the foregoing statement of facts does not describe all of the defendant's conduct relating to the offense charged in this case nor does it identify all of the persons with whom the defendant may have engaged in illegal activities. This statement of facts includes those facts necessary to support the plea agreement between the defendant and the United States. It does not include each and every fact known to the defendant or to the United States, and it is not intended to be a full enumeration of all of the facts surrounding the defendant's case.

Respectfully submitted,

RAJ PAREKH
ACTING UNITED STATES ATTORNEY

By: _____
Brian R. Hood
Assistant United States Attorney

By: Kaitlin G. Cooke
Kaitlin G. Cooke
Assistant United States Attorney

After consulting with my attorney and pursuant to the plea agreement entered into this day between the defendant, PRADIPSINH DHARMENDRASINH PARMAR, and the United States, I hereby stipulate that the above Statement of Facts is true and accurate, and that had the matter proceeded to trial, the United States would have proved the same beyond a reasonable doubt.

2/22/21
Date

PRADIPSINH DHARMENDRASINH PARMAR
Defendant

I am counsel for defendant, PRADIPSINH DHARMENDRASINH PARMAR. I have carefully reviewed this Statement of Facts with him and, to my knowledge, his decision to agree to this Statement of Facts is an informed and voluntary decision.

2/22/21
Date

Vaughan C. Jones
Counsel for Defendant