

Elder Fraud Cases Involving Extradition Fact Sheet

The Department of Justice's Office of International Affairs (OIA) worked with numerous countries to secure evidence and capture defendants. During the sweep period, defendants in elder fraud cases were extradited from Canada, The Cayman Islands, Costa Rica, Jamaica, and Poland. Case examples include:

- **Sheldon Hurley**, 39, a citizen of Markham, Ontario, Canada, was charged in the Western District of New York. Hurley is alleged to have participated in a scheme beginning in May 2007 until July 2011 to obtain money from hundreds of victims. Hurley allegedly personally received in excess of \$159,000. Scheme participants operated websites for fictitious financial services companies offering to arrange loans to individuals with credit problems. The victims provided personal information and were told they would be contacted by a lender for approval. When informed that a loan was arranged, applicants were instructed to sign and return a loan agreement, provide bank information, and pay an "insurance deposit." Hurley is alleged to then have engaged individuals to act as Company payees and obtained the funds from the United States. Loan applicants never received the loans, but were often coerced into making multiple deposits. An extradition request was sent to Canada in December 2017, and Hurley was surrendered to the United States on Jan. 15, 2019.

Case number is 14-CR-137-S.

- **Stephanie V. Quintero Sanchez**, 33, a U.S. citizen, and **David Franklin Von Riesen**, 32, a U.S. citizen, were charged in the Western District of North Carolina. The defendants are charged for working and assisting in operating an illegal telemarketing solicitation center in Costa Rica. They allegedly defrauded U.S. residents, many of whom were over the age of 55, by contacting the victims by telephone and falsely telling them that they had won large monetary prizes in sweepstakes contests. They are alleged to have falsely represented themselves as agents of a U.S. government department or agency, such as the Federal Trade Commission or FBI, and stated that they were responsible for ensuring that the sweepstakes winners received their money. They allegedly told the victims that in order to receive the prize the victims had to send a sum of money, usually between several hundred to several thousand dollars, for a purported refundable insurance or other fee, via a Western Union or MoneyGram money wire transfer payment. The defendants allegedly repeatedly called the victims as long as they were willing to send more money, each time with a different explanation as to why additional money must be sent to claim the prize. No sweepstakes existed and no prize monies were ever awarded. Rather, the defendants are alleged to have kept the victims' funds and used them for their personal benefit or to fund the continued operations of the call center. Quintero Sanchez was extradited from Costa Rica on July 27, 2018; Von Riesen was extradited from Costa Rica on Sept. 12, 2018.

Case number is 3:16-cr-136-MOC.

- **Gavin Jordan**, 46, a citizen of the Republic of Guyana; **Stephen E. Finck**, 50, a U.S. citizen; **Sabrina Mommers**, 42, a U.S. citizen; and **Michael Saxon**, 49, a citizen of

Canada, were charged in the Western District of North Carolina. The defendants were part of a large group of individuals charged for operating illegal telemarketing solicitation centers in Costa Rica during a span of several years. The defendants allegedly defrauded U.S. residents, many of whom were over the age of 55, by contacting the victims via telephone and falsely telling them they had won a large monetary prize in a sweepstakes contest and needed to send money for a purported refundable insurance or other fee or duty via Western Union or MoneyGram wires or Postal Money Orders, to receive the prize. After they received the initial payment, the defendants are alleged to have called the victims again, claiming they had won first prize and a greater sum of money must be sent, or providing some other explanation as to why additional money must be sent to claim the prize. They are alleged to have falsely represented themselves as agents of a U.S. federal department or agency, such as the Federal Trade Commission or Department of Consumer Affairs. Victims never received a prize. The defendants are alleged to have kept the victims' money for their personal benefit or to fund the continued operations of the call center. Jordan was extradited from Costa Rica on March 7, 2018; Finck was extradited from Costa Rica on May 17, 2018; and Mommers was extradited from Costa Rica on June 20, 2018. An extradition request was sent to Canada in January 2018. On Oct. 26, 2018, Saxon waived extradition and was surrendered to the United States on Nov. 15, 2018.

Case number is 3:15-cr-213-MOC-DSC.

- **Fawaz Sebai**, 41, a citizen of Canada; **Vassilios Klouvatos**, 34, a citizen of Canada; and **Lefkothea Klouvatos**, 27, a citizen of Canada, were charged in the Southern District of Illinois. Sebai and Vassilios Klouvatos allegedly owned and operated a telemarketing business located in Quebec, Canada. Lefkothea Klouvatos allegedly managed the call center for this telemarketing business. The telemarketers employed by the business allegedly made unsolicited telephone calls to the elderly victims in the United States. By making false statements and misrepresentations, the telemarketers convinced the U.S. victims to purchase supposed prescription drug discount cards. The fee for these products was typically \$299. OIA sought extradition in 2015. Canada extradited Sebai to the United States on Sept. 19, 2018. Vassilios and Lefkothea Klouvatos were surrendered to the United States on Oct. 4, 2018.

Case number is 14-301.36-MJR.

- **Clifford Kirstein**, 28, a citizen of Canada; **Kelen Magael Buchan**, 26, a citizen of Canada; **Mark EL Bernachawy**, 33, a citizen of Canada, and **Agiyl Kamaldin**, 31, a citizen of Canada, were charged in the Central District of California. The defendants, acting from Canada, allegedly contacted victims in the United States by telephone and falsely claimed to be a relative in distress who needed money in a foreign country (also known as a "grandparents scheme"). The defendants allegedly induced victims to send thousands of dollars via wire transfer through Western Union or MoneyGram, sometimes soliciting money from the same victim multiple times. The defendants also allegedly arranged to have those wire payments converted to cash, by retrieving the money from Western Union or MoneyGram, using a code number for the transaction (supplied by the

victim) and the name of the intended recipient that they had provided to the victim. An extradition request for all listed defendants was sent to Canada in November 2014. Kamaldin and Buchan were surrendered on Jan. 16, 2019. Kirstein and El Bernachawy were surrendered on Jan. 24, 2019.

Case number is CR-13-00469.

- **Omoefe Okoro**, 48, a citizen of Canada, was charged in the Middle District of Pennsylvania. Okoro and others are alleged to have engaged in an attorney “collection scam” in Ontario, Canada, and elsewhere. In particular, Okoro and his co-conspirators are alleged to have conducted a scheme in which they contacted businesses and individuals, including elderly victims, and requested, among other things, to collect an outstanding debt. The suspects, posing as the third party, then sent a counterfeit check to the victim for deposit and requested that the victim wire funds to an account overseas, typically in Japan, South Korea, or China. Canada surrendered Okoro to the United States on Aug. 29, 2018.

Case number is 12-CR-0241.

- **Michael Peart**, 34, a citizen of Jamaica, was charged in the Northern District of New York. An elderly victim was contacted in August 2012 by Michael Peart, who told the victim she had won \$250,000, and that all she needed to do to claim the money was to pay the taxes on the award. The victim began wiring money through Western Union and mailed cash via the U.S. Postal Service, as directed by Peart, to individuals in New York City. Between August 2012 and August 2013, phone records confirm that there were over 1,500 calls between the victim and the number used by Peart. In total, the victim withdrew over \$100,000 from her bank accounts at Peart’s direction. An extradition request was sent to Jamaica for execution in October 2017. Peart was surrendered to the United States on Nov. 30, 2018.

Case number is 5:14-CR-298(NAM)

- **Jean Sebastien Gaudreault**, 44, a citizen of Canada; **Pascal Gaudreault**, 49, a citizen of Canada; and **Gabriel Frenette**, 28, a citizen of Canada, was charged in the Central District of California. From approximately July 11, 2011, through September 2012, Jean Sebastien Gaudreault, Gabriel Frenette, and allegedly, Pascal Gaudreault, perpetrated a “grandparent scam,” also known as a “relative in distress” scam. The defendants called elderly victims in the United States and falsely claimed to be a relative of the victim, in trouble in a foreign country. The defendants would ask the elderly person to send money to resolve the problem. The defendants would beg the elderly victim to keep the situation secret from the purported grandchild’s parents to protect the grandchild from embarrassment or punishment. The defendants would often instruct the elderly victim to send money via Western Union or MoneyGram. Jean Sebastien Gaudreault and Gabriel Frenette were surrendered to the United States from Canada on Dec. 15, 2017. Jean-Sebastien Gaudreault and Gabriel Frenette have both pleaded guilty and were sentenced to one year and one day and 27 months in prison, respectively. Pascal Gaudreault was surrendered to the United States from Canada on Feb. 13, 2019 and is pending trial.

Case number is CR-12-0917

- **Rosemarie Delatorre**, 61, a U.S. and Cayman Islands citizen, was charged in the State of Hawaii. Delatorre was extradited from the Cayman Islands to stand trial in Hawaii for identity theft, theft, forgery, and fraudulent use of a credit card. Delatorre, a certified nurse assistant, was the caregiver for an 83-year-old elderly woman with lung problems and mobility issues residing at a retirement home in Maui. Delatorre gained access to the victim's personal bank information and forged a letter to an Ohio bank, instructing the bank to close the account and transfer a \$41,000 certificate of deposit in the account to a bank in Hawaii, forged checks withdrawing \$31,750 from the victim's account, and used an ATM card to withdraw money without permission. When the victim learned that she would no longer be able to afford living at the retirement home due to her account being nearly depleted, she committed suicide. OIA requested Delatorre's extradition from the Cayman Islands on Aug. 11, 2017. She was extradited on Oct. 17, 2018.

Case number is Cr. No. 09-1-0091.

An indictment is merely an allegation, and a defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.