



U. S. Department of Justice

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FORMER FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY C.A.R.E. STUDENTS AND FORMER UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA FOOTBALL PLAYER INDICTED FOR CONSPIRACY, BANK FRAUD, AND AGGRAVATED IDENTITY THEFT

TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA – A federal grand jury returned an indictment charging seven defendants with conspiracy to commit bank fraud, 17 counts of bank fraud, and 8 counts of aggravated identity theft. The indictment was announced by Lawrence Keefe, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Florida.

The defendants named in this indictment are:

- Kh'lajuwon Amari Murat, 21, Miramar, Florida;
- Kadeem Wysler Joseph Telfort, 22, Miramar, Florida;
- Jada Tisean Barton, 22, Titusville, Florida;
- Ariel Apperlyn Smith, 22, Coral Springs, Florida;
- Deshauan Antwaniece Sanders, 22, Miami, Florida; and
- Voshon Howard, 22, Miramar, Florida

The indictment alleges that Telfort, a student and football player at the University of Florida, and the other defendants who were all students at Florida State University ("FSU") in the Center for Academic Retention and Enhancement ("C.A.R.E."), conspired to defraud federally insured financial institutions between July 1, 2017, and October 31, 2017. The indictment further alleges that Murat and Telfort used the Internet and text messaging to unlawfully obtain credit card and debit card account numbers belonging to third parties, and that they used those account numbers to fraudulently deposit funds into the student accounts of FSU students, including accounts belonging to Barton, Smith, Sanders, and Howard. The indictment also alleges that the group communicated by cell phone and text messaging to plan the execution of the scheme. Specifically, the indictment alleges that Murat requested the student account numbers from FSU students and also requested that the FSU students purchase merchandise from the FSU Bookstore using funds that he and Telfort had fraudulently deposited or would later fraudulently deposit into those students' accounts. It is alleged that the FSU students gave the purchased merchandise to Murat and others, and were permitted to keep any remaining balance of the funds that Murat and Telfort fraudulently deposited into their student accounts for their own personal use. In total,

it is alleged that the group fraudulently obtained and attempted to obtain approximately \$53,000 in funds to which they were not entitled.

All defendants face a potential maximum penalty of 20 years in prison for each conspiracy to commit bank fraud and bank fraud count, and Murat faces an additional 2-year mandatory minimum prison sentence, consecutive to any other sentence imposed, for each aggravated identity theft count.

This case resulted from an investigation by the Florida State University Police Department and the United States Secret Service. Assistant United States Attorney Justin M. Keen is prosecuting the case.

The jury trial is scheduled for August 17, 2020, at 8:15 a.m. before the Honorable Judge Robert Hinkle at the United States Courthouse in Tallahassee.

An indictment is merely an allegation by a grand jury that a defendant has committed a violation of federal criminal law and is not evidence of guilt. All defendants are presumed innocent and entitled to a fair trial, during which it will be the government's burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt at trial.

The United States Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Florida is one of 94 offices that serve as the nation's principal litigators under the direction of the Attorney General. To access public court documents online, please visit the [U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida](https://www.uscourts.gov/uscourts/flnd) website. For more information about the United States Attorney's Office, Northern District of Florida, visit <http://www.justice.gov/usao/fln/index.html>.

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