UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA : [redacted] **INDICTMENT**

- v. - : 23 Cr.

ISAAC ODURO BOATENG, : 23 CRIM 26
a/k/a "Kofi Boat," :
INUSAH AHMED, :
a/k/a "Pascal," :
DERRICK VAN YEBOAH, :
a/k/a "Van," and :
PATRICK KWAME ASARE, :
a/k/a "Borgar," :

Defendants. :

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COUNT ONE
(Conspiracy to Commit Wire Fraud)

The Grand Jury charges:

Overview of Scheme

1. At all times relevant to this Indictment, ISAAC ODURO BOATENG, a/k/a "Kofi Boat," INUSAH AHMED, a/k/a "Pascal," DERRICK VAN YEBOAH, a/k/a "Van," and PATRICK KWAME ASARE, a/k/a "Borgar," the defendants, and others known and unknown, were members of a criminal enterprise (the "Enterprise") based primarily in Ghana that committed fraud against individuals and businesses located across the United States, including in the Southern District of New York. The Enterprise perpetrated multiple romance scams and business email compromises, among other fraudulent activity.

2. Many of the Enterprise's romance scam victims were vulnerable, older men and women who lived alone. The Enterprise conducted the romance scams by sending victims emails,

text messages, and messages through online dating and social media websites that deceived the victims into believing they were in a romantic relationship with a person who was, in fact, a fake identity assumed by members of the Enterprise. Once members of the Enterprise had gained the trust of victims using the fake identity, they convinced the victims, under false pretenses, to transfer money to bank accounts the victims believed were controlled by their romantic interests, when in fact the bank accounts were controlled by members of the Enterprise. At times, the members of the Enterprise also persuaded victims, under false pretenses, to receive funds in the victims' bank accounts, which, unbeknownst to the victims, were fraud proceeds, and to transfer those funds to accounts under the control of members of the Enterprise. The members of the Enterprise, posing as the romantic interest of the victims, also introduced victims to other individuals purporting to be, for example, consultants or lawyers, who then persuaded the victims, under false pretenses, to wire money to bank accounts controlled by members of the Enterprise. Members of the Enterprise often referred to victims of romance scams as "clients" and the victims' money as "clean money," because the victim was deceived into initiating the transfer of money and would be unlikely to immediately report the transfer as fraudulent to the victim's bank.

3. The Enterprise also conducted business email compromises to trick and deceive businesses into wiring funds into accounts controlled by the Enterprise. Members of the Enterprise typically created email accounts with slight variations of email accounts used by employees of a victim company or third parties engaged in business with a company to "spoof" or impersonate those employees or third parties. These fake email accounts were specifically designed to trick other employees of the company with access to the company's finances into thinking the fake email accounts were authentic. The fake email accounts were then used to send instructions to wire money to certain bank accounts and also included fake authorization letters for the wire

transfers that contained forged signatures of company employees. By utilizing this method of deception, the Enterprise sought to trick victims into transferring money to bank accounts the victims believed were under the control of legitimate recipients of the funds as part of normal business operations, when in fact the bank accounts were under the control of members of the Enterprise. Members of the Enterprise often referred to these business email compromises as "ali baba."

4. Members of the Enterprise referred to their fraudulent activity as "sakawa," a Ghanaian term that refers to internet fraud. In general, members of the Enterprise known as "sakawa boys" or "game boys" conducted the online fraudulent activity and directed their victims to transfer money to middlemen in the United States. These middlemen often held business bank accounts in the names of shell companies purportedly involved in, among other things, automobile sales, food imports and exports, and freight trucking and shipping. The middlemen would take a percentage of the funds and launder the rest of the money to other members of the Enterprise located in West Africa.

5. Once the funds had been transferred to West Africa, the profits were largely funneled to individuals called "chairmen," who directed the activities of the other members of the Enterprise. ISAAC ODURO BOATENG, a/k/a "Kofi Boat," INUSAH AHMED, a/k/a "Pascal," DERRICK VAN YEBOAH, a/k/a "Van," and PATRICK KWAME ASARE, a/k/a "Borgar," the defendants, all reside in Ghana. BOATENG and AHMED were chairmen of the Enterprise, and VAN YEBOAH and ASARE were also high-ranking members of the Enterprise. VAN YEBOAH personally perpetrated romance scams on behalf of the Enterprise. In total, the Enterprise stole and laundered more than approximately $100 million from dozens of victims.

STATUTORY ALLEGATIONS

6. From at least in or about 2016 through at least in or about May 2023, in the Southern District of New York and elsewhere, ISAAC ODURO BOATENG, a/k/a "Kofi Boat," INUSAH AHMED, a/k/a "Pascal," DERRICK VAN YEBOAH, a/k/a "Van," and PATRICK KWAME ASARE, a/k/a "Borgar," the defendants, and others known and unknown, willfully and knowingly combined, conspired, confederated, and agreed together and with each other to commit wire fraud, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1343.

7. It was a part and an object of the conspiracy that ISAAC ODURO BOATENG, a/k/a "Kofi Boat," INUSAH AHMED, a/k/a "Pascal," DERRICK VAN YEBOAH, a/k/a "Van," and PATRICK KWAME ASARE, a/k/a "Borgar," the defendants, and others known and unknown, knowingly having devised and intending to devise a scheme and artifice to defraud and for obtaining money and property by means of false and fraudulent pretenses, representations, and promises, would and did transmit and cause to be transmitted by means of wire, radio, and television communication in interstate and foreign commerce, writings, signs, signals, pictures, and sounds for the purpose of executing such scheme and artifice, to wit, BOATENG, AHMED, VAN YEBOAH, and ASARE engaged in a scheme to defraud victims via romance scams and business email compromises and to obtain fraud proceeds transferred through bank accounts controlled by members of the Enterprise, which scheme was furthered through electronic communications and monetary transfers to and from the Southern District of New York and elsewhere.

(Title 18, United States Code, Section 1349.)

COUNT TWO
(Wire Fraud)

The Grand Jury further charges:

8. The allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 5 of this Indictment are repeated and realleged as if fully set forth herein.

9. From at least in or about 2016 through at least in or about May 2023, in the Southern District of New York and elsewhere, ISAAC ODURO BOATENG, a/k/a "Kofi Boat," INUSAH AHMED, a/k/a "Pascal," DERRICK VAN YEBOAH, a/k/a "Van," and PATRICK KWAME ASARE, a/k/a "Borgar," the defendants, knowingly having devised and intending to devise a scheme and artifice to defraud, and for obtaining money and property by means of false and fraudulent pretenses, representations and promises, transmitted and caused to be transmitted by means of wire communication in interstate and foreign commerce writings, signs, signals, pictures, and sounds, for the purpose of executing such scheme and artifice, to wit, BOATENG, AHMED, VAN YEBOAH, and ASARE engaged in a scheme to defraud victims via romance scams and business email compromises and to obtain fraud proceeds transferred through bank accounts controlled by members of the Enterprise, which scheme was furthered through electronic communications and monetary transfers to and from the Southern District of New York and elsewhere.

(Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1343 and 2.)

COUNT THREE
(Conspiracy to Commit Money Laundering)

The Grand Jury further charges:

10. The allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 5 of this Indictment are repeated and realleged as if fully set forth herein.

11. From at least in or about 2016 through at least in or about May 2023, in the Southern District of New York and elsewhere, ISAAC ODURO BOATENG, a/k/a "Kofi Boat," INUSAH AHMED, a/k/a "Pascal," DERRICK VAN YEBOAH, a/k/a "Van," and PATRICK KWAME

ASARE, a/k/a "Borgar," the defendants, and others known and unknown, willfully and knowingly combined, conspired, confederated, and agreed together and with each other to commit money laundering, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1956(a)(1)(B)(i).

12. It was a part and an object of the conspiracy that ISAAC ODURO BOATENG, a/k/a "Kofi Boat," INUSAH AHMED, a/k/a "Pascal," DERRICK VAN YEBOAH, a/k/a "Van," and PATRICK KWAME ASARE, a/k/a "Borgar," the defendants, and others known and unknown, knowing that the property involved in a financial transaction represented the proceeds of some form of unlawful activity, would and did conduct and attempt to conduct such a financial transaction, which transaction affected interstate and foreign commerce and involved the use of a financial institution which was engaged in, and the activities of which affected, interstate and foreign commerce, and which in fact involved the proceeds of specified unlawful activity, to wit, the wire fraud scheme charged in Count Two of this Indictment, knowing that the transaction was designed in whole and in part to conceal and disguise the nature, the location, the source, the ownership, and the control of the proceeds of specified unlawful activity, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1956(a)(1)(B)(i).

(Title 18, United States Code, Section 1956(h).)

COUNT FOUR
(Conspiracy to Receive Stolen Money)

The Grand Jury further charges:

13. The allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 5 of this Indictment are repeated and realleged as if fully set forth herein.

14. From at least in or about 2016 through at least in or about May 2023, in the Southern District of New York and elsewhere, ISAAC ODURO BOATENG, a/k/a "Kofi Boat," INUSAH AHMED, a/k/a "Pascal," DERRICK VAN YEBOAH, a/k/a "Van," and PATRICK KWAME

ASARE, a/k/a "Borgar," the defendants, and others known and unknown, knowingly and willfully combined, conspired, confederated, and agreed together and with each other to commit an offense against the United States, to wit, a violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 2315.

15. It was a part and object of the conspiracy that ISAAC ODURO BOATENG, a/k/a "Kofi Boat," INUSAH AHMED, a/k/a "Pascal," DERRICK VAN YEBOAH, a/k/a "Van," and PATRICK KWAME ASARE, a/k/a "Borgar," the defendants, and others known and unknown, would and did receive, possess, conceal, store, barter, sell, and dispose of goods, wares, merchandise, securities, and money, of the value of $5,000 and more, which had crossed a state and United States boundary after being stolen, unlawfully converted, and taken, knowing the same to have been stolen, unlawfully converted, and taken, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 2315.

Overt Acts

16. In furtherance of said conspiracy and to effect the illegal object thereof, the following overt acts, among others, were committed in the Southern District of New York and elsewhere:

a. On or about June 4, 2020, PATRICK KWAME ASARE, a/k/a "Borgar," the defendant, messaged a co-conspirator not named herein ("CC-1") that $187,000 in romance scam proceeds were being transferred to CC-1 for laundering.

b. On or about June 16, 2020, ISAAC ODURO BOATENG, a/k/a "Kofi Boat," the defendant, messaged CC-1 that $200,000 in romance scam proceeds were being transferred to CC-1 for laundering.

c. On or about August 28, 2020, INUSAH AHMED, a/k/a "Pascal," the defendant, messaged a second co-conspirator not named herein ("CC-2") that $300,000 in romance scam proceeds were being transferred to CC-2 for laundering. Those funds were transferred across state lines and CC-2 ultimately received those funds in a bank account located in the Southern District of New York.

d. On or about September 3, 2020, DERRICK VAN YEBOAH, a/k/a "Van," the defendant, induced a romance scam victim to transfer $18,500 to a third co-conspirator not named herein ("CC-3") for laundering.

(Title 18, United States Code, Section 371.)

COUNT FIVE
(Receipt of Stolen Money)

The Grand Jury further charges:

17. The allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 5 of this Indictment are repeated and realleged as if fully set forth herein.

18. From at least in or about 2016 through at least in or about May 2023, in the Southern District of New York and elsewhere, ISAAC ODURO BOATENG, a/k/a "Kofi Boat," INUSAH AHMED, a/k/a "Pascal," DERRICK VAN YEBOAH, a/k/a "Van," and PATRICK KWAME ASARE, a/k/a "Borgar," the defendants, received, possessed, concealed, stored, bartered, sold, and disposed of goods, wares, merchandise, securities, and money, of the value of $5,000 and more, which had crossed a state and United States boundary after being stolen, unlawfully converted, and taken, knowing the same to have been stolen, unlawfully converted, and taken, to wit, BOATENG, AHMED, VAN YEBOAH, and ASARE received proceeds of fraudulent activity, which were transferred from bank accounts and money transfer locations outside of New York to bank accounts in the Southern District of New York and elsewhere.

(Title 18, United States Code, Sections 2315 and 2.)

FORFEITURE ALLEGATIONS

19. As the result of committing the wire fraud and stolen property offenses charged in Counts One, Two, Four, and Five of this Indictment, ISAAC ODURO BOATENG, a/k/a "Kofi Boat," INUSAH AHMED, a/k/a "Pascal," DERRICK VAN YEBOAH, a/k/a "Van," and PATRICK KWAME ASARE, a/k/a "Borgar," the defendants, shall forfeit to the United States, pursuant to Title 18, United States Code, Section 981(a)(1)(C) and Title 28, United States Code, Section 2461(c), any and all property, real and personal, which constitutes or is derived from proceeds traceable to the commission of said offenses, including but not limited to a sum of money in United States currency representing the amount of proceeds traceable to the commission of said offenses.

20. As a result of committing the money laundering offense charged in Count Three of this Indictment, ISAAC ODURO BOATENG, a/k/a "Kofi Boat," INUSAH AHMED, a/k/a "Pascal," DERRICK VAN YEBOAH, a/k/a "Van," and PATRICK KWAME ASARE, a/k/a "Borgar," the defendants, shall forfeit to the United States, pursuant to Title 18, United States Code, Section 982(a)(1), any and all property, real and personal, involved in said offense, and any property traceable to such property, including but not limited to a sum of money in United States currency representing the amount of property involved in said offense.

Substitute Assets Provision

21. If any of the above-described forfeitable property, as a result of any act or omission of the defendants:

(a) cannot be located upon the exercise of due diligence;

(b) has been transferred or sold to, or deposited with, a third person;

(c) has been placed beyond the jurisdiction of the Court;

(d) has been substantially diminished in value; or

(e) has been commingled with other property which cannot be subdivided without difficulty;

it is the intent of the United States, pursuant to Title 21, United States Code, Section 853(p) and Title 28, United States Code, Section 2461(c), to seek forfeiture of any other property of the defendants up to the value of the above forfeitable property.

(Title 18, United States Code, Sections 981 and 982;
Title 21, United States Code, Sections 853; and
Title 28, United States Code, Section 2461.)

[redacted]
FOREPERSON

Damian Williams
DAMIAN WILLIAMS
United States Attorney