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UNITED STATES ATTORNEY

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I. Introduction

Good afternoon and thank you all for being here today. My name is Tim Heaphy and I'm the United States Attorney for the Western District of Virginia.

This morning in the United States District Court here in Danville, Judge Kiser sentenced Jansen Yeboah to federal prison for his role in a credit card scheme that targeted local businesses. Today's sentencing brings to an end a fraud case that was the product of outstanding, cooperative police work.

I want to talk a little about these cases and also recognize those men and women whose quick actions helped bring these defendants to justice.

II. United States v. Cisse, et al.

On July 6, 2011, an off-duty Danville Sheriff's Office employee was working at Sam's Club. She suspected fraudulent activity when a person trying to apply for a membership was asked to see his ID in order to fill out the membership application. She alertly notified the Danville Police Department, who responded immediately. When they arrived, they identified Ibrahima Cisse as the person attempting to purchase the Sam's Club membership, and both he and the man with him, Louis Soumah, had multiple credit cards which the police suspected were stolen.

Officers questioned these men and discovered that Cisse had two driver's licenses in his wallet, as well as a key to a room at the nearby Super 8 Motel. When officers arrived at the motel to conduct a "knock and talk" they observed six men, Sekou Fofana, Mory Keita, Ibrahim

Konte, Bede Ngala, Aboubacar Soumah and Mohamed Fofana, along with various items related to credit card fraud, inside the room.

The Danville officers knew they were onto something. They obtained a search warrant, which allowed them to search the motel rooms where these men were located. When they conducted that search, they recovered three computers, an electronic card re-writer, numerous gift cards, large numbers of credit cards, boxes of cigarettes, receipts and two, hand-written ledgers. Jansen Yeboah attempted to flee during the search, but was apprehended. On his person, authorities located an additional 23 gift cards, most of which had stolen credit card numbers encoded on them.

After the search warrant, a number of police agencies joined forces to conduct a thorough investigation. The United States Secret Service joined forces with the Danville Police Department. The investigators were able to determine that this conspiracy had recently relocated from the Maryland/DC area to Danville for the purpose of committing credit card fraud. They specifically learned that Sekou Fofana was the “boss”

with Ibrahima Cisse serving as the “manager.” These two men would receive stolen credit card numbers via emails from a variety of sources. Using an electronic card re-writer and a computer, the two leaders of the conspiracy illegally “charged” depleted gift cards or credit cards with the stolen credit and debit card numbers belonging to other individuals.

The charged cards would then be distributed to other members of the conspiracy who were instructed to use them to buy cartons of cigarettes, electronics, and retail gift cards. The purchased items would be stored in local storage units before being transferred out of the area for distribution.

Throughout the life of the conspiracy, various businesses and banking institutions suffered losses in excess of \$170,000, based on estimates from the defendants’ own ledgers and receipts.

All of this evidence was brought to our office, and we brought charges against the members of this conspiracy, some by informations and others who were indicted by a federal grand jury, for multiple counts of fraud. Many defendants pleaded guilty, providing additional evidence

of the conspiracy. Only one of the nine defendants, Jansen “Koby” Yeboah, went to trial, and he was subsequently convicted of thirteen counts, which included conspiracy to commit credit card fraud, six substantive counts of credit card fraud, and six counts of aggravated identity theft.

To date, nine defendants have been convicted and sentenced here in federal court in Danville for their roles in this conspiracy. Before today’s sentencing, their sentences ranged from 24 months in federal prison to 70 months in federal prison. The total number of months of imprisonment was 330 months, or 27.5 years.

I want to thank Assistant United States Attorneys Ashley Neese and Elizabeth Wright, who supervised this investigation and successfully handled the Yeboah trial in July. Ashley and Elizabeth worked extremely hard on this complex case and did an excellent job bringing these fraudsters to justice. Ashley and Elizabeth - thanks so much for your hard work.

III. Cooperative Investigation

There are a couple of lessons to take away from this case, both of which I believe are worth highlighting today.

First, this case really is a remarkable example of fine police work and interagency co-operation. From the alert off-duty Deputy Sheriff who was working at Sam's Club, to the Special Agents from the Secret Service who unraveled the fraud scheme, everyone involved did a top notch job. I want to thank that Danville Sheriff's employee, who was alert enough to spot suspicious conduct by Cisse with regards to his identification.

I also want to thank the **Danville Police Department**, whose officers responded with their usual professionalism. They obtained the search warrant and started to piece this case together. They stayed committed to these cases through their conclusion, including tireless dedication during the four-day jury trial of Jansen Yeboah here in Danville last July.

Sensing that this case may have involved a broader credit card fraud conspiracy, the Danville PD involved the **Secret Service**, who

immediately dove into this case and did great investigative work.

Other law enforcement, including the **Pittsylvania County Sheriff's Office**, also worked with the Secret Service to bring these efforts to their conclusion. We are lucky to have such competent and professional officers here in Danville.

These agents and agencies worked seamlessly together, each doing his or her job to ensure a just outcome. Their success shows what is possible when local and federal agencies work together. We can do great things when we share information and join forces. Such cooperation is especially important in a time of diminished resources, when law enforcement at all levels is struggling to fund their operations. We have to work smart, and work together. We did that here, with great success.

The other lesson here is one of geography, and it transcends the facts of this case. These defendants are not residents of Danville or even the Western District of Virginia. They are fly-by-night crooks who blow into town, defraud a bunch of local businesses and quickly leave town.

They saw Danville as a land of opportunity, a place where they could get away with fraud without much risk of detection.

We see this in a number of areas - the targeting of smaller communities like Danville by out of state actors bent on victimizing our people. We see drug sellers pulling into town, bringing drugs and guns into our neighborhoods. We see fraudsters like these defendants here for the sole purpose of committing acts of deception before leaving again. We believe that some people target communities like Danville because they believe that they can get away with things more easily here, far from the sophistication of a big city.

This case shows that they're wrong. The successful outcome in this case demonstrates the risk that people face when they come to Danville and other communities in this district to commit crimes. We work hard to keep those communities safe, and to prevent drug sales, fraud, and other forms of criminal activity far from Danville and the Western District of Virginia. We hope that the lengthy sentences in this case help us get the word out that if you come to Danville to commit

crime, you will be caught and prosecuted.

Our secret weapon here is cooperation. A fraud scheme like this triggers a chain reaction that brought multiple agencies together. That is how we operate in Danville and elsewhere. And it allows us to stop fraud and other crimes committed by anyone - particularly those who think this is somehow fertile ground to exploit.

IV. Conclusion

Thank you all for coming today and we will do our best to answer any questions you may have.