

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

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:
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA :
:
:
- v. - :
:
SADICK EDUSEI KISSI, : 21 Cr.
:
Defendant. :
----- X

SEALED INDICTMENT

21 CRIM 064

COUNT ONE

(Conspiracy to Commit Wire Fraud)

The Grand Jury charges:

BACKGROUND

1. At all times relevant to this Indictment, SADICK EDUSEI KISSI, the defendant, and others known and unknown, were members of a criminal enterprise (the "Enterprise") based in West Africa that committed a series of business email compromises and romance scam frauds against individuals and businesses located across the United States, including in the Southern District of New York.

MEANS AND METHODS OF THE CONSPIRACY

2. The objective of the Enterprise's business email compromise fraud scheme was to trick and deceive businesses into wiring funds into accounts controlled by the Enterprise. First, members of the Enterprise 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 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 the victims into transferring hundreds of thousands of dollars 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.

3. The Enterprise conducted the romance scams by using electronic messages sent via email, text messaging, or online dating websites that deceived the victims, many of whom were vulnerable, older men and women who lived alone, into believing the victim was in a romantic relationship with a fake identity assumed by members of the Enterprise. Once members of the Enterprise had gained the trust of the victims using the fake identity, they used false pretenses to cause the victims to wire

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 used false pretenses to cause the victims 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 the victims to other individuals purporting to be, for example, consultants or lawyers, who then used false pretenses to cause the victims to wire money to bank accounts controlled by members of the Enterprise.

4. SADICK EDUSEI KISSI, the defendant, received fraud proceeds from victims of the Enterprise in bank accounts that he controlled that were located in the Bronx, New York and elsewhere. Once he received the fraud proceeds in bank accounts under his control, the defendant withdrew, transported, and laundered those fraud proceeds to other members of the Enterprise located in Ghana.

STATUTORY ALLEGATIONS

5. From at least in or about July 2015 through in or about May 2019, in the Southern District of New York and elsewhere, SADICK EDUSEI KISSI, the defendant, and others known

and unknown, willfully and knowingly did combine, conspire, confederate, and agree together and with each other to commit wire fraud, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1343.

6. It was a part and an object of the conspiracy that SADICK EDUSEI KISSI, the defendant, and others known and unknown, willfully and 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, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1343, to wit, KISSI engaged in a scheme together with others to receive interstate wire transfers and cash deposits from victims of business email compromise and romance fraud schemes via bank accounts controlled by the defendant and other members of the conspiracy in the Bronx, New York.

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

COUNT TWO

(Money Laundering Conspiracy)

The Grand Jury further charges:

7. The allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 4 of this Indictment are repeated and realleged as if fully set forth herein.

8. From at least in or about 2014 through in or about February 2020, in the Southern District of New York and elsewhere, SADICK EDUSEI KISSI, the defendant, and others known and unknown, intentionally 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).

9. It was a part and object of the conspiracy that SADICK EDUSEI KISSI, the defendant, and others known and unknown, knowing that the property involved in certain financial transactions represented proceeds of some form of unlawful activity, would and did conduct and attempt to conduct such financial transactions, which in fact involved the proceeds of specified unlawful activity, to wit, the wire fraud scheme charged in Count One of this Indictment, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1343, knowing that the transactions were designed in whole and in part to conceal and disguise the nature, location, source, ownership, and 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 THREE

(Conspiracy to Receive Stolen Money)

The Grand Jury further charges:

10. The allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 4 of this Indictment are repeated and realleged as if fully set forth herein.

11. From at least in or around 2014 through in or around February 2020, in the Southern District of New York and elsewhere, SADICK EDUSEI KISSI, the defendant, and others known and unknown, willfully and knowingly did combine, conspire, confederate, and agree 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.

12. It was a part and object of the conspiracy that SADICK EDUSEI KISSI, the defendant, 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

13. 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 July 16, 2015, SADICK EDUSEI KISSI, the defendant, opened a bank account ("Account-1") in the Bronx, New York.

b. On or about April 20, 2016, KISSI opened another bank account ("Account-2") in the Bronx, New York.

c. Between in or about September 2016 and in or about May 2017, KISSI received at least approximately \$119,130 in wire transfers from a romance scam victim of the Enterprise in Account-1 and Account-2.

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

COUNT FOUR

(Receipt of Stolen Money)

The Grand Jury further charges:

14. The allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 4 of this Indictment are repeated and realleged as if fully set forth herein.

15. From at least in or about 2014 through in or about February 2020, in the Southern District of New York and elsewhere, SADICK EDUSEI KISSI, the defendant, 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, KISSI received proceeds of business email compromise and romance fraud schemes which were transferred from bank accounts and money transfer locations outside of New York to bank accounts in the Bronx, New York and elsewhere.

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

FORFEITURE ALLEGATIONS

16. As the result of committing the wire fraud and stolen property offenses charged in Counts One, Three, and Four of this Indictment, SADICK EDUSEI KISSI, the defendant, 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.

17. As a result of committing the money laundering offense alleged in Count Two of this Indictment, SADICK EDUSEI KISSI, the defendant, 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

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

- 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 defendant up to the value of the forfeitable property described above.

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


FOREPERSON


AUDREY STRAUSS
United States Attorney

Form No. USA-33s-274 (Ed. 9-25-58)

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21 Cr.

(18 U.S.C. §§ 371, 1349, 1956(h), 2315,
and 2)

AUDREY STRAUSS

United States Attorney



Foreperson
