

PRESS RELEASE

Ringleader Sentenced To 122 Months in Prison in Connection With \$63 Million Mail Theft Conspiracy That Included Two Postal Employees

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For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of Michigan

DETROIT – The ringleader of a \$63 million scheme that involved stealing checks from the mail and selling them online was sentenced to just over 10 years in prison yesterday, United States Attorney Jerome F. Gorgon Jr. announced today.

Gorgon was joined in the announcement by U.S. Postal Service Inspector General Tammy Hull; Detroit Division Inspector in Charge Felicia B. George, U.S. Postal Inspection Service, Special Agent in Charge Karen Wingerd, Detroit Field Office, Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation; Special Agent in Charge Andrew McKay, Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration, Mid-Atlantic Field Division; and Anthony P. D'Esposito, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Labor.

Jaiswan Williams (32, of Rochester Hills) was the last of four defendants to be sentenced. Co-defendant Daquan Foreman (32, of Eastpointe), Vanessa Hargrove (40, of Detroit), and Crystal Jenkins (32, of Detroit), were all previously sentenced, as follows:

- Foreman: 48 months in custody;
- Hargrove: 12 months and 1 day in custody;
- Jenkins: 1 day in custody, followed by 3 years' supervised release.

All four defendants, including Williams were sentenced by U.S. District Judge Judith E. Levy.

Hargrove and Jenkins were United States Postal Service employees who diverted and ultimately stole checks and other negotiable instruments from the mail, including a high

volume of tax refund checks issued by the U.S. Treasury. Williams and Foreman were the administrators of the online marketplaces used to sell the checks.

According to court records, postal employees Hargrove and Jenkins would provide the stolen checks to Williams and Foreman in exchange for payments. Williams and Foreman would take those checks and market them for sale via Telegram Messenger, a cloud-based, cross-platform instant messaging application. Prices varied based on the face-value of the checks. One of the Telegram channels, named "Whole Foods Slipsss," was used to advertise high-dollar checks, while another channel, named "Uber Eats Slips," was used to advertise lower-dollar checks. "Slips" is a term commonly used in these schemes to refer to stolen checks. Transactions were completed off-platform using a variety of electronic payment systems. Purchasers of these checks would then attempt to fraudulently cash them using a variety of methods. The investigation revealed that the two Telegram channels marketed more than 10,000 individual checks for sale, with a combined face value of more than \$63M.

Williams's sentence also reflected a conviction for money laundering activities dating back to October 2022. In addition, he accepted responsibility for \$1.5M in fraudulent pandemic unemployment insurance benefit claims he submitted between August and December 2020, using the personally identifiable information (PII) of dozens of individuals.

"The sentencings in this investigation represent the hard work and dedication by USPS OIG Special Agents working alongside our federal law enforcement partners and the U.S. Attorney's Office to bring charges in this mail theft investigation," said Tammy Hull, Inspector General, U.S. Postal Service, "The OIG, along with our law enforcement partners, remain committed to safeguarding the U.S. Mail and ensuring the accountability and integrity of Postal Service employees and those external subjects who collude with them."

"The sentencings in this case underscore the U.S. Postal Inspection Service's dedication to safeguarding the nation's mail system and holding to account those who seek to exploit it and, by extension, the American public," said Detroit Division Inspector in Charge Felicia B. George. "Let this be a warning: if you abuse the U.S. Postal Service and victimize the citizens who rely upon it, we will utilize every avenue and tool at our disposal to prosecute you to the fullest extent of the law."

"The stealing of checks is not a victimless crime. The stolen checks belonged to citizens, to help them make payments for vital services or help through a tough time," said Special Agent in Charge Karen Wingerd, Detroit Field Office, IRS-CI. "With today's sentencing, all of those responsible are now held to account for exploiting the public

and undermining trust in critical government systems. We are committed, along with our law enforcement partners, to using our unique expertise to track intricate financial systems, find criminals, and hold them accountable for the crimes committed.”

“The Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA) aggressively investigates individuals who attempt to exploit U.S Treasury refund checks meant for hard working taxpayers for their own private gain,” said TIGTA Special Agent in Charge Andrew McKay . “TIGTA's mission is to protect the integrity of our nation's tax administration system. We are committed to working with our law enforcement partners to ensure that those who violate federal laws are prosecuted to the fullest extent possible.”

“Jaiswan Williams exploited his platform as a rapper, using his celebrity status to rip off American taxpayers. These criminal acts will not be tolerated. We remain relentless in this war on fraud and will ensure every fraudster that attempts to undermine the American people receives their prison sentence. I want to thank the United States Attorney’s Office and our law enforcement partners that support this critical mission,” said Anthony P. D’Esposito, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Labor.

This multi-agency investigation was led by the U.S. Postal Service Office of the Inspector General (USPS-OIG), with the assistance of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service (USPIS); the Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigations (IRS-CI); the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA); and the Department of Labor Office of the Inspector General (DOL-OIG). It was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Ryan A. Particka.

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