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New York Man Sentenced to Over 10 Years in Prison for Laundering Proceeds for Elder Fraud Scam Network

TUCSON, Ariz. – Ivan Wilbur Seales, 58, a resident of New York and citizen of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, was sentenced on Nov. 6, by United States District Judge Scott H. Rash, to 121 months in prison. Seales was previously found guilty by a jury for Conspiracy to Commit Money Laundering. As part of his sentence, Seales was also ordered to pay approximately $855,000 in restitution to the numerous victims who suffered a loss.

Seales laundered nearly $1 million in proceeds for a fraud scheme network that preyed on elderly victims from around the country, including Arizona. Seales kept a portion of the ill-gotten gains and helped the scammers launder other fraudulent proceeds through a maze of financial transactions he conducted through shell companies, crypto transfers, cash withdrawals, and other financial transfers offshore.

The scam targeted elderly victims with “phishing attacks” such as pop-ups and websites that impersonated trusted entities like banks and tech companies. These victims were directed to call other scammers who falsely represented they were representatives of legitimate companies such as Apple or Microsoft.

Some victims received a “phishing” email or text message indicating that they had received a charge on their account from the Geek squad, PayPal, or an Anti-Virus Software company. These charges never occurred and were sent to the victims by the fraudsters to lure the victims into the scheme. Once the victims called the fraudsters, they were led to believe that these “legitimate companies” erroneously transferred an “over-refunded amount” to the victims’ bank accounts. As instructed, victims then transferred their own money back to the scammers believing that they were returning the scammers the “over-refunded amounts.”

Victims were also lied to and informed that their bank accounts had been hacked or were compromised. At least one victim was told his account was linked to child pornography. To further the scam, the fraudsters directed the victims to transfer

their money to various locations to “protect” their accounts or to “catch” the scammers.

The United State Postal Inspection Service and New York State Police conducted the investigation. Various other State or local law enforcement agencies also provided support for the investigation. The U.S. Attorney’s Office, District of Arizona, Tucson, handled the prosecution.

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