U.S. Attorney, California, Southern press release, 2026-11-13
Source: https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdca/pr/chinese-national-viral-youtube-video-sentenced-6-12-years-27-million-multinational

Chinese National in Viral YouTube Video Sentenced to 6 ½ Years in $27 Million Multinational Fraud Scheme Targeting 2,000 Seniors

SAN DIEGO – Jiandong Chen, aka “Little Tiger,” was sentenced in federal court today to 6 ½ years in prison for his part in a $27 million fraud and money laundering scheme targeting approximately 2,000 elderly victims across the United States.

In April 2026, Chen pleaded guilty and admitted his role in the fraud and money laundering conspiracy. According to public documents, members of the conspiracy operated a series of technical support, bank impersonation, government impersonation and refund scams targeting elderly victims. Victims received unsolicited phone calls, emails, and pop-up ads directing victims to call a phone number. Unbeknownst to the victims, those phone numbers belonged to India-based scam call centers.

Once a victim called the call center, members of the conspiracy used social engineering techniques to build trust with the victim. After building trust with a victim, the conspirators would induce victims to send money to members of the conspiracy in the United States, in locations throughout Southern California, Nevada and elsewhere. The money was sent to members of the conspiracy, including Chen, most often as bulk cash via express mail packages but also as wire transfers. Certain members of the conspiracy also did in-person pickups of money directly from victims.

Jn July 2023, Chen was confronted in a viral YouTube video by Ashton Bingham and Art Kulik from Trilogy Media—both of whom attended today’s sentencing hearing. During the video, Chen traveled to a residence in the Los Angeles area to pick up bulk cash from someone he believed to be an elderly victim of the fraud scheme. In a video posted to their YouTube channel entitled “CONFRONTING SCAMMERS WITH A FAKE FUNERAL (EPIC REACTIONS),” Chen was confronted by Bingham and Kulik about working for a scam organization. Here’s a link to the video .

At today's sentencing hearing, the prosecutor outlined the timeline of Chen's involvement. Chen, a Chinese national, moved to the United States in November 2022. By February 2023, Chen was actively participating in the fraud and money laundering scheme as evidenced by numerous videos of Chen retrieving victim packages and counting victims' money, as shown below—including videos where Chen was wearing the same distinctive clothing as in the viral YouTube video.

Based on publicly filed documents, despite being arrested by local law enforcement in June 2023, Chen's involvement continued through at least December 22, 2023, when he was encountered by federal agents in Upland, California attempting to retrieve additional victim packages. In his plea agreement, Chen admitted that his time during the conspiracy involved over $9.5 million in victim loss, that he used fake IDs to retrieve victim packages, and that he frequently relocated to various jurisdictions, including to the Southern District of California, to evade law enforcement.

"These victims weren't foolish. They were lied to and exploited by a sophisticated criminal network," said United States Attorney Adam Gordon, "Stopping fraud takes an online village. We'll keep prosecuting aggressively, but with friends to our cause like Ash and Art, we can do even more."

"Fraud schemes like this do far more than steal money. They rob victims of their peace of mind, their trust, and their sense of security," said Special Agent in Charge Mark Remily of the FBI San Diego Field Office. "Chen played a key role in a sophisticated scheme that targeted vulnerable older Americans and generated millions of dollars in illicit proceeds. Today's sentence reflects the unwavering commitment of FBI San Diego and our law enforcement partners to protect seniors and ensure those who exploit them for profit are identified, investigated, and brought to justice."

Before pronouncing the 78-month sentence, U.S. District Judge Robert S. Huie stated: Chen "engaged in extensive course of conduct in stealing from some of the most vulnerable people here in the United States." Judge Huie acknowledged that the money taken from elderly victims was "more than just money" and included "people's self-respect, their dignity, trust with their family members," emphasizing that what victims endured involved "desperation in the last years of somebody's life" and was a "tragic thing to suffer."

Investigators identified over 2,000 elderly victims from throughout the country, including victims in San Diego, who were defrauded and who suffered more than $27 million in losses over an approximately two-year period between 2021-2023. Victims were in their 70s and 80s. Chen also admitted that he and his co-conspirators laundered fraud proceeds through cryptocurrency to transfer funds to foreign-based counterparts, to pay co-conspirators, and to fund travel to retrieve cash packages sent by victims, including trips to Las Vegas, Nevada.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Kevin Mokhtari.

DEFENDANT Case Number 24-cr-1317-RSH-02

Jiandong Chen, aka “Little Tiger” Age: 42 Los Angeles, CA

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Conspiracy to Commit Mail and Wire Fraud – Title 18, U.S.C., Section 1349, 2326

Maximum Penalties: Forty years in prison; $1 million fine

Conspiracy to Launder Monetary Instruments – Title 18, U.S.C., Section 1956(a)(1)(A)(i), 1956(a)(1)(B)(i) and 1956(h)

Maximum Penalties: Twenty years in prison; maximum fine of $500,000 or twice the amount laundered

INVESTIGATING AGENCIES

Federal Bureau of Investigation

Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation – Office of Inspector General

Homeland Security Investigations

San Diego County District Attorney’s Office

San Diego County Sheriff’s Department

San Diego Police Department

San Diego Elder Justice Task Force

Chino Police Department

Coronado Police Department

Escondido Police Department

Glendora Police Department

Long Beach Police Department

Orange County Sheriff’s Department

*The charges and allegations contained in an indictment or complaint are merely accusations, and the defendants are considered innocent unless and until proven guilty.