



U. S. Department of Justice

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JAMAICAN MAN SENTENCED TO 51 MONTHS IN FEDERAL PRISON FOR OPERATING SWEEPSTAKES SCAM TARGETING ELDERLY VICTIMS

PENSACOLA, FLORIDA – Romario Mark Anthony Murray, 27, of Montego Bay, Jamaica was sentenced to 51 months in federal prison after pleading guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud and mail fraud, four counts of wire fraud, and three counts of mail fraud. The convictions stemmed from activities designed to defraud elderly victims of their money through false promises of sweepstakes prizes. The sentence was announced by United States Attorney Jason R. Coody for the Northern District of Florida.

"Americans are fed up with the constant barrage of scams that maliciously target the elderly and other vulnerable citizens," said U.S. Attorney Coody. "Given our large elder population, Florida experiences far too many instances of fraud against unsuspecting, vulnerable seniors. With the assistance of our dedicated law enforcement partners, we are committed to investigating and vigorously prosecuting those who seek to steal the hard-earned savings of our senior citizens."

Since the late 1990s, telemarketers in Jamaica have been engaging in a scam in which they contact victims in the United States and falsely claim their targets have won large sweepstakes prizes. Victims, who are primarily elderly, are induced to send cash or cash equivalents in order to release their supposed prizes. The victims' funds are often transported by wire transfers and United States Postal Service packages.

Court documents reflect that between 2017 and 2019, Murray and others conspired together to receive wire transfers and packages mailed by victims, totaling \$608,801.99. The conspirators then took a percentage of the funds for themselves before forwarding the remainder to Murray in Jamaica. Nineteen victims were identified through banking records and law enforcement analysis.

Murray's prison sentence will be followed by 3 years of supervised release.

"This sentencing should send a clear message to criminals defrauding American residents," said Juan A. Vargas, Acting Inspector in Charge, U.S. Postal Inspection Service, Miami Division. "The

U.S. Postal Inspection Service will relentlessly pursue them, regardless of international borders, and bring them to justice.”

First Assistant U.S. Attorney Michelle Spaven prosecuted the case following a joint investigation by the United States Postal Inspection Service, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, and the Panama City Police Department.

The United States Attorney’s Office for the Northern District of Florida is one of 94 offices that serve as the nation’s principal litigators under the direction of the Attorney General. To access public court documents online, please visit the [U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida](#) website. For more information about the United States Attorney’s Office, Northern District of Florida, visit <http://www.justice.gov/usao/fln/index.html>.

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