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Department of Justice

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District of Maryland

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, October 14, 2020

California Fraudster Sentenced in Maryland to Three Years in Federal Prison for International Mail and Wire Fraud Conspiracy

Received, Transported, and Stored Stolen Televisions Worth Approximately \$1.6 Million

Greenbelt, Maryland – U.S. District Judge George J. Hazel yesterday sentenced Saulina Helen Eady, age 38, of Los Angeles, California, to three years in federal prison, followed by three years of supervised release, for conspiracy to commit mail and wire fraud, in connection with a scheme to fraudulently obtain goods using what appeared to be a military e-mail address, but was actually a registered Yahoo e-mail address. Judge Hazel also entered an order requiring Eady to forfeit and to pay restitution in the full amount of one of the victim's losses, which is \$640,172.80. Eady has been detained since her arrest in October 2018.

The sentence was announced by United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Robert K. Hur; Special Agent in Charge Robert E. Craig, Jr. of the Defense Criminal Investigative Service - Mid-Atlantic Field Office; Special Agent in Charge John Eisert of Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Baltimore; and Special Agent in Charge Nasir Khan of the U.S. Department of Commerce, Office of Export Enforcement's Washington Field Office.

According to Eady's plea agreement, a co-conspirator established and used what was purported to be a U.S. Navy e-mail address, authentic forms, titles, addresses and other indicia to pose as A U.S. government contracting agent and fraudulently obtain merchandise, including large-screen televisions, specialized communications equipment, cellular telephones and computers. Much of the fraud scheme was conducted from outside the United States, including from Nigeria. Three victim companies—one that provided wireless voice and data services that was headquartered in Washington State, one that was a wholesale audio-video distributor and manufacturer's representative located in Virginia, and a defense contractor that designed, manufactured, and marketed communications equipment that was headquartered in Maryland—shipped merchandise, without prior payment, to Eady's East Coast co-conspirators. Those individuals then shipped the stolen items to Eady and others on the West Coast.

Specifically, Eady admitted that from October 2015 until March 2017, she assisted in receiving, transporting, and storing the stolen televisions, ostensibly on behalf of the United States government, by renting trucks and transporting the stolen televisions to storage locations in the Los Angeles area, where Eady and others had rented storage units. Following the sale of the televisions, Eady was paid in cash for receiving and moving the televisions. According to her plea agreement, the organization obtained approximately 2,109

televisions over the course of the scheme, and the number of televisions and loss attributable to Eady is 493 televisions worth at least \$1,181,290.80, but no more than \$3.5 million.

However, based on bank records, surveillance footage, financial and business records of the victim companies, and other information, the Court determined at the sentencing that the loss foreseeable to Saulina Eady was between \$1.5 million and \$3.5 million.

Of the nine defendants charged in this case, seven have pleaded guilty to their roles in the fraud scheme, including Saulina Eady. In February 2020, Saulina's brother, Saul Eady was sentenced to four years in federal prison and ordered to pay restitution of \$640,127.80. One defendant, Eunice Nkongho, is scheduled for trial in December, and one defendant, Peter Unakalu, is a fugitive.

United States Attorney Robert K. Hur praised the Defense Criminal Investigative Service, Homeland Security Investigations, and the Department of Commerce's Office of Export Enforcement for their work in the investigation, and thanked the FBI Washington Field Office and the Naval Criminal Investigative Service for their assistance. Mr. Hur thanked Assistant U.S. Attorneys Jennifer R. Sykes and Joseph R. Baldwin, who are prosecuting the case.

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Topic(s):

Financial Fraud

Component(s):

USAO - Maryland

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Updated October 14, 2020