



THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Northern District of Iowa

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, February 9, 2022

Virginia Man Pleads Guilty in Paycheck Protection Program Money Laundering Scheme

Laundered over \$900,000 in Fraudulently Obtained Funds

A Virginia man who laundered over \$900,000 in Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) funds pled guilty on February 8, 2022, in federal court in Sioux City. Benjamin Sakyi, age 31, from Dumfries, Virginia, formerly of Ghana, was convicted of one count of money laundering conspiracy.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security ("CARES") Act is a federal law enacted in late March 2020 that provided emergency financial assistance, including Paycheck Protection Program ("PPP") and Economic Injury Disaster Loan ("EIDL") funds, to the millions of Americans who were suffering the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Evidence at the plea hearing, and a prior detention hearing in Virginia, showed that Sakyi received over \$900,000 in fraudulently obtained CARES Act funds at three different financial institutions in the names of two Virginia corporations, Blue Flight Logistics LLC and NKB Enterprise LLC. Sakyi then transferred the funds elsewhere. Sakyi received the CARES Act funds from a Minnesota man, Donald Franklin Trosin, formerly of Armonstrong, Iowa. Trosin had submitted over 20 fraudulent PPP and EIDL loan applications to the Small Business Administration in the name of Trosin and another individual at Minnesota and Iowa financial institutions. Trosin falsely represented he had 120 employees on his payroll and over \$5 million in payroll expenses when, in truth, Trosin did not operate a business at all.

Sentencing before United States District Court Chief Judge Leonard T. Strand will be set after a presentence report is prepared. Sakyi remains in custody of the United States Marshal pending sentencing. Sakyi faces a possible maximum sentence of 20 years' imprisonment, a \$500,000 fine, and three years of supervised release following any imprisonment. In July 2021, the district court sentenced Trosin to 40 months in federal prison for his role in the money laundering conspiracy.

On May 17, 2021, the Attorney General established the COVID-19 Fraud Enforcement Task Force to marshal the resources of the Department of Justice in partnership with agencies across government to enhance efforts to combat and prevent pandemic-related fraud. The Task Force bolsters efforts to investigate and prosecute the most culpable domestic and international criminal actors and assists agencies tasked with administering relief programs to prevent fraud by, among other methods, augmenting and incorporating existing coordination mechanisms, identifying resources and techniques to uncover fraudulent

actors and their schemes, and sharing and harnessing information and insights gained from prior enforcement efforts. For more information on the Department's response to the pandemic, please visit <https://www.justice.gov/coronavirus>.

Anyone with information about allegations of attempted fraud involving COVID-19 can report it by calling the Department of Justice's National Center for Disaster Fraud (NCDF) Hotline at 866-720-5721 or via the NCDF Web Complaint Form at: <https://www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form>.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Timothy L. Vavricek and was investigated by the Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigations, the Small Business Administration-Office of Inspector General, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Court file information at <https://ecf.iand.uscourts.gov/cgi-bin/login.pl>.

The case file number is 21-CR-4013. The case file number for Donald Trosin's case is 20-CR-4066.

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Topic(s):

Coronavirus

Financial Fraud

Component(s):

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