

THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

District of Colorado

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, January 20, 2023

Colorado Man Sentenced to Federal Prison for Role in Money Laundering Conspiracy

DENVER – The United States Attorney's Office for the District of Colorado announces James Albert Witte, age 69, formerly of Wray, Colorado, was sentenced to 26 months in federal prison for conspiracy to commit money laundering. Witte was also ordered to serve three years of supervised release and pay \$763,089.21 in restitution to the victims of the scheme.

According to the plea agreement in the case, from January of 2020 until September of 2020, the defendant was part of a conspiracy to launder funds obtained from a government official impersonation scheme. Victims were contacted by telephone and coerced into believing they were under investigation by "agents" of federal law enforcement agencies (the FBI, SSA, DHS, Treasury, or DEA). It was further part of the conspiracy that the conspirators told these victims that their identities had been connected to a criminal incident, their imminent arrest and/or deportation from the United States had been ordered by law enforcement, and that the only way to avoid arrest and or deportation was to pay the "Government" large sums of money, as instructed. The victims were instructed to withdraw cash from their bank accounts and mail the cash to various addresses, which turned out to be Walgreens stores in northeastern Colorado. Witte's role in the scheme was to use fake identification cards provided to him by a conspirator to pick up victims' packages of cash mailed to the Walgreens stores. He used some of the cash to purchase money orders, which one of his codefendants then deposited into third-party accounts. The cash contained in 33 packages picked up by Witte, the shipping costs for those packages, and shipping costs for another 15 packages that were either intercepted by law enforcement or a victim, resulted in a loss to the victims of \$763,089.21. Witte received a percentage of the cash in each package he picked up.

Judge Raymond P. Moore sentenced the defendant on January 20, 2023.

This investigation was conducted jointly with investigators from the Social Security Administration (SSA) Office of Inspector General (OIG), United States Postal Inspection Service, Department of Homeland Security-OIG, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), and the Sterling, Colorado Police Department. The District Attorney for the 13th Judicial District also provided assistance. This case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Martha A. Paluch and Laura Hurd.

CASE NUMBER: 22-cr-00202

Topic(s):

Financial Fraud

Component(s):

USAO - Colorado

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