

Kirkwood Resident Pleads Guilty for Identity Theft

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ST. LOUIS – United States District Court Judge Stephen R. Clark accepted a plea of guilty from Glenda Seim, 81 years old of Kirkwood, Missouri on November 2, 2021, for two counts of identity theft related to her participation as a “money mule” in various fraudulent schemes on behalf of her online romantic interest.

A grand jury in the Eastern District of Missouri previously indicted Seim for the charges. A “money mule” is a person who receives fraudulently obtained money and merchandise on behalf of a scammer, and then forwards the proceeds to the scammer.

Sometime during 2014, Seim began an online relationship with an individual who claimed to be a United States citizen with business interests in Nigeria. Throughout the years, Seim’s purported romantic interest would ask for her assistance in paying fees,

taxes, and penalties to the Nigerian government or his business associates. He claimed that he could not leave Nigeria unless he paid those funds. Despite having never met her romantic interest in person or communicated with him in any form other than texting, Seim began sending him money from her Social Security retirement benefits and pension. He later asked her to pawn electronic equipment that he had others send to her in the mail and forward the funds to him.

Because the return was not as high as he wanted, Seim began participating in other fraudulent schemes including: receiving MoneyGram wire transfers from senders she did not know; depositing counterfeit and fraudulently obtained checks into financial accounts she opened; allowing her romantic interest to fraudulently transfer funds from the financial accounts of various businesses into her financial accounts; and accepting unemployment insurance benefit payments on behalf of individuals she did not know. A check drawn on the retirement account of a romance fraud victim in the amount of \$100,000 was among Seim's fraudulent deposits. Seim kept a portion of the funds fraudulently obtained before providing the balance to her online romantic partner.

Despite warnings by wire transfer agencies, local police officers, federal law enforcement representatives, and bank representatives and the forced closing of her financial accounts, Seim continued to facilitate the transfer of funds on behalf of her online romantic interest. Between June 2014 and February 2021, Seim attempted to conduct fraudulent transactions between \$550,000 and \$1,500,000.

Seim is scheduled to be sentenced on February 10, 2022.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the United States Secret Service.