



United States Attorney's Office For Southern District Of Illinois Announces Participation In National Money Mule Initiative

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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FAIRVIEW HEIGHTS – In conjunction with the Department of Justice's Fourth Annual Money Mule Initiative, the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Illinois has announced its participation in the national effort to combat money mule activities.

In the past 18 months, the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Illinois has initiated prosecutions of several money mules who have either operated from or targeted victims located in, Southern Illinois.

One person from East St. Louis - 49-year-old Talfanita Cobb - is charged with receiving fraudulently obtained unemployment insurance debit cards, withdrawing funds from the cards, and transferring the funds to other members of the fraud scheme via Bitcoin.

Money mules are individuals who are recruited by national and international fraud schemes to help with the laundering of fraud proceeds or transport goods purchased with fraud proceeds. These individuals are usually recruited over the internet, through dating websites, job recruiting advertisements, or other types of internet solicitations.

The money mules are then asked to help move money and goods from the victims to the fraudsters, who are oftentimes located overseas.

Sometimes the money mules are themselves innocent victims who do not realize that they are assisting with criminal activity. Other times, however, the money mules come to realize that what they are doing is wrong and/or illegal. When this happens, the money mules become knowing participants in the fraud schemes they are assisting and are subject to prosecution.

Other individuals charged in the Money Mule Initiative include Danny Vaughn, 62, of Centralia, Illinois. Vaughn is charged with purchasing goods, such as computers and cell phones, with stolen credit card numbers, and then shipping those goods to overseas addresses, including Malaysia; Jaykumar Patel, 32, of Tampa, Florida. Patel is charged with receiving cash from fraud victims, including victims located in Southern Illinois, and transporting that cash to other participants in the fraud scheme.

Members of the public are reminded to be careful of individuals they meet online. If those individuals ask you to receive or transfer funds or goods, purchase gift cards, or engage in any type of suspicious activity, please report this activity to law enforcement.

MONEY MULE INITIATIVE | 2021

4,750

ACTIONS

Taken Against
Money Mules

\$3.7M

in **FRAUD**
PROCEEDS
RECLAIMED

**ACTIONS
TAKEN**

in
**Every
State**

