

U.S. Attorney Office Seizes \$24,000 in Suspected Cryptocurrency Scam

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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FAIRVIEW HEIGHTS – The U.S. Attorney’s Office in the Southern District of Illinois announced Thursday the seizure of cryptocurrency valued at approximately \$24,000 from an account believed to be involved in a fraud scheme against an O’Fallon resident.

“Many of us are still learning the facts about buying and trading cryptocurrency, and as in many cases, scammers are targeting the vulnerable,” said U.S. Attorney Rachelle Aud Crowe. “I appreciate the collaboration between the O’Fallon Police Department and the U.S. Secret Service for their efforts to recover the victim’s funds.”

“The U.S. Secret Service is dedicated to safeguarding the integrity of U.S. financial systems and preventing the public from losing their hard-earned money to these types of scams,” said Stephen S. Webster, Resident Agent in Charge of the U.S. Secret Service Springfield Office. “Unfortunately, new technology has made it easier for individuals abroad to take advantage of innocent victims throughout the United States. The U.S. Secret Service worked quickly with our partners at the U.S. Attorney’s Office in the Southern District of Illinois and O’Fallon Police Department to seize this cryptocurrency and prevent it from lining the pockets of criminals overseas.”

The U.S. District Court issued a default judgment on Feb. 15 on a civil forfeiture complaint. The civil forfeiture complaint, which was filed on Sept. 21, 2022, sought the seizure of 14.77997889 Ethereum (ETH) Cryptocurrency from a Binance Account holder based in Nigeria. According to an exhibit filed in support of the government’s civil forfeiture complaint, a woman contacted the O’Fallon Police Department in June 2022 to report she was a victim of fraud in a suspected cryptocurrency scam worth more than \$32,000. In May 2022, the victim began communicating with a Twitter account unbeknownst to her at the time was impersonating a cryptocurrency influencer. The fraudster instructed her to deposit \$32,662 worth of Bitcoin into a “3Twarriorstrading.com” account. By the time the victim realized the website was a scam, she could not retrieve the cryptocurrency. The value of the forfeited property will be returned to the victim through a process known as remission.

The victim lost about \$32,000, but the investigation could only trace and forfeit property worth approximately \$24,000. No criminal charges have been filed related to the civil forfeiture.

The O’Fallon Police Department and the U.S. Secret Service contributed to the investigation. Assistant U.S. Attorney Adam E. Hanna is prosecuting the case.