

PRESS RELEASE

Dallas man heads to prison for deed fraud scheme

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For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Southern District of Texas

HOUSTON – A 61-year-old man has been sent to federal prison following his conviction of money laundering as well as conspiracy to commit and committing wire fraud, announced U.S. Attorney Alamdar S. Hamdani.

A federal jury deliberated for approximately half a day following an eight-day trial before returning a guilty verdict Sept. 20, 2022, on all counts against Clarence Roland III.

Today, U.S. District Judge Lee H. Rosenthal ordered Roland to serve 120 months in federal prison to be immediately followed by three years of supervised release. Roland was ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$3,251,897.41. A money judgment in the amount of \$1,984,642.09 was also entered. In handing down the sentence, the court noted Roland knew what he was doing was illegal and he pocketed the proceeds.

In 2009, Roland began working with co-conspirator Arlando Jacobs, 57, Oakland, California, in a deed fraud scheme to cancel and challenge mortgage loans held in the name of Jacobs or others. During this time, Roland frequently used the alias Joshua Stein, while Jacobs used Caleb Wright or Dexter Ponzey.

According to testimony, they solicited and received the help of other co-conspirators to establish over 11 business entities or shell companies and office spaces with mailing addresses in Houston, The Woodlands and Katy to carry out the scheme.

The jury heard that Roland and co-conspirators fraudulently acquired real property by manipulating and filing fraudulent deeds and other documents. Roland sold the properties and received profits from the sales. The original mortgage liens were not paid off and the mortgage holders were ultimately defrauded. Some title insurance companies were forced to pay buyer claims who had acquired the title when purchasing the real property Roland sold to them.

The co-conspirators fabricated a series of documents to falsely create the appearance of transferred ownership of real property to the shell companies. In order to do so, they signed documents claiming to represent one of the many entities in the transactions. The same names were used as signors on many documents and purported to represent different entities. They were also fraudulently notarized by using fake notary stamps.

The defense attempted to convince the jury the law allowed him to file fraudulent documents in the real property records to transfer title of houses on which there were mortgages so he could then sell them free of those mortgages. They did not believe those claims and found Roland guilty as charged.

Jacobs pleaded guilty in advance of trial in an unrelated fraud case in the Eastern District of Texas and was sentenced to 51 months in prison and ordered to pay restitution of \$7.6 million.

Roland will remain in custody pending transfer to a U.S. Bureau of Prisons facility to be determined in the near future.

The FBI, Federal Housing Finance Agency - Office of Inspector General (OIG) and Housing and Urban Development - OIG conducted the investigation. Assistant U.S. Attorneys John Braddock and John Wakefield prosecuted the case.

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