



United States Department of Justice

THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

SOUTHERN DISTRICT *of* TEXAS

**Department of Justice**

U.S. Attorney's Office

Southern District of Texas

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, September 20, 2022

## **Jury Returns Guilty Verdict in Local Deed Fraud Scheme**

HOUSTON – A federal jury sitting in Houston has convicted a 61-year-old Dallas man for money laundering, conspiracy to commit and committing wire fraud, announced U.S. Attorney Jennifer B. Lowery.

The jury deliberated for half a day before convicting Clarence Roland III on all charges following a eight-day trial.

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 Northern District of Texas and was sentenced to 51 months in prison and ordered to pay restitution of \$7.6 million.

U.S. District Judge Lee H. Rosenthal presided over the trial and set sentencing for Jan. 25, 2023. At that time, Roland faces up to 30 years for conspiracy to commit wire fraud affecting a financial

institution and 20 years for wire fraud. They also carry potential fines of up to \$1 million. For money laundering, he faces another 10 years as well as a fine of \$250,000.

Previously released on bond, Roland was taken into custody following the conviction today where he will remain pending sentencing.

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 are prosecuting the case.

Updated September 20, 202