

Dorchester Man Sentenced for Role in \$4 Million Bank Fraud Conspiracy

A Dorchester man was sentenced today in federal court in Boston in connection with a \$4 million bank fraud scheme.

Charles Washington, 44, was sentenced by U.S. District Court Senior Judge Mark L. Wolf to 126 months in prison, five years of supervised release, and ordered to pay restitution of \$1,836,819 and a fine of \$30,000. In August 2017, Washington pleaded guilty to one count of bank fraud conspiracy and four counts of bank fraud for his role in coordinating unauthorized withdrawals from federally insured banks.

Washington obtained bank account information, personally identifiable information, and sample signatures from bank customers with high balances. He then recruited runners to impersonate the account holders in order to make unauthorized withdrawals by obtaining and distributing fake driver's licenses to the runners that bore the runners' photographs with the account holders' personal information. Washington instructed the runners on how to forge the victims' signatures. To avoid detection, runners withdrew money from victims' accounts at several different bank branches.

Washington and others also recruited runners to open bank accounts (known as drop accounts) in the name of non-existent businesses (known as shell business). The shell businesses were registered and named as if they were title companies, property management companies, contracting businesses, and other businesses for which incoming large-dollar wire transfers would not be unusual. Washington provided the shell businesses' information to co-conspirators who made unauthorized wire transfers in the hundreds of thousands of

dollars into the drop accounts. Once the drop accounts were funded with unauthorized wire transfers, Washington and the co-conspirators accompanied runners to bank branches to withdraw the money – in cash, by check, or by wire transfers to other drop accounts – before the victims of the unauthorized wire transfers realized that their accounts had been compromised.

Washington and the co-conspirators gained unauthorized access to approximately \$4 million – either in bank accounts that they took over, or in proceeds unlawfully wired to drop accounts for withdrawal – and successfully withdrew approximately \$2 million.