

Two Massachusetts parents convicted by jury in college admissions scheme

Former senior executives convicted of participating in "side door" scheme to facilitate their children's college admissions to the University of Southern California.

Two former executives were convicted today by a federal jury in Boston in connection with conspiring to bribe athletic officials to facilitate their children's admission to the University of Southern California (USC) as purported athletic recruits.

John Wilson, 62, of Lynnfield, Mass., and Gamal Abdelaziz, 64, of Las Vegas, Nev., were convicted of one count of conspiracy to commit mail and wire fraud and honest services mail and wire fraud and one count of conspiracy to commit federal programs bribery. Wilson was also convicted of three counts of wire fraud and honest services wire fraud, two counts of federal programs bribery, and one count of filing a false tax return. U.S. District Court Judge Nathaniel M. Gorton scheduled sentencing for Feb. 16, 2022 for Abdelaziz and Feb. 17, 2022 for Wilson.

In 2013, Wilson agreed to pay William "Rick" Singer \$220,000 to facilitate his son's admission to USC as a purported water polo player. More specifically, in October 2013, Singer sent Wilson a water polo profile for Wilson's son that included fabricated awards and swim times. After Wilson's son was accepted to USC, Wilson wired \$100,000 to Singer's sham charity, the Key Worldwide Foundation (KWF), \$100,000 to Singer's company, The Key, and \$20,000 directly to Singer. Wilson paid the bribe from a corporate account and deducted it as a business expense. In 2018, Wilson agreed to pay Singer

\$1.5 million to have his twin daughters admitted to Harvard University and Stanford University as purported sailing recruits.

In 2017, Abdelaziz agreed to pay Singer \$300,000 to facilitate the admission of his daughter to USC as a purported basketball recruit, despite the fact that she did not make her high school's varsity team and did not play basketball at all during her junior and senior years in high school. In a July 2017 email, Singer asked Abdelaziz for an action shot of his daughter playing basketball to be used in an athletic profile for USC. A co-conspirator, Laura Janke, created a phony athletic profile for Abdelaziz's daughter which included falsified awards and athletic honors. In October 2017, Abdelaziz's daughter was admitted to USC as a basketball recruit and in March 2018, she was formally accepted and Abdelaziz wired \$300,000 to KWF.

Singer and Janke previously pleaded guilty and are awaiting sentencing.

Case information, including the status of each defendant, is available [here:](https://www.justice.gov/usao-ma/investigations-college-admissions-and-testing-bribery-scheme)
<https://www.justice.gov/usao-ma/investigations-college-admissions-and-testing-bribery-scheme>.

The charge of conspiracy to commit mail and wire fraud and honest services mail and wire fraud provides for a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000 or twice the gross gain or loss, whichever is greater. The charge of conspiracy to commit federal programs bribery provides for a sentence of up to five years in prison, three years of supervised release, and a fine of \$250,000 or twice the gross gain or loss, whichever is greater. The charge of wire fraud and honest services wire fraud provides for a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, three years of supervised release, and a fine of \$250,000 or twice the gross gain or loss, whichever is greater. The charge

of federal programs bribery provides for a sentence of up to 10 years in prison, three years of supervised release, and a fine of \$250,000 or twice the gross gain or loss, whichever is greater. The charge of filing a false tax return provides for a sentence of up to three years in prison, one year of supervised release and a fine of \$100,000. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

Acting United States Attorney Nathaniel R. Mendell; Joseph R. Bonavolonta, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Division; Joleen Simpson, Special Agent in Charge of the Internal Revenue Service's Criminal Investigations in Boston; and Mark Deckett, Resident Agent in Charge of the Department of Education, Office of Inspector General made the announcement today. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Stephen E. Frank, Leslie A. Wright, Kristen A. Kearney and Ian Stearns of Mendell's Securities, Financial & Cyber Fraud Unit are prosecuting the case.

The details contained in the charging documents are allegations. The remaining defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.