



Department of Justice

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JAMAICAN NATIONAL ARRESTED IN CONNECTION WITH FRAUDULENT LOTTERY SCHEME BASED IN JAMAICA

WASHINGTON – A 33-year-old woman was arrested yesterday in Boca Raton, Florida, following her eight-count indictment by a grand jury in the Western District of North Carolina, the Department of Justice announced.

Shashana Stacyann Smith, a Jamaican citizen residing in Florida, was charged with conspiracy to commit mail and wire fraud and seven counts of wire fraud in connection with a fraudulent lottery scheme based in Jamaica. Smith's initial court appearance is today at 10:00 a.m. EST in U.S. District Court in the Southern District of Florida.

As alleged in the indictment, Smith participated in a conspiracy to defraud Americans and induce them to send thousands of dollars to Smith and others in the United States and Jamaica. Victims were contacted and falsely informed that they had won a lottery. They were instructed to send money for so-called fees in order to receive their prize, and were contacted repeatedly with additional requests to pay money. Victims never received any lottery winnings.

"International schemes with phony promises of large lottery winnings continue to target unsuspecting Americans," said Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Benjamin C. Mizer, head of the Justice Department's Civil Division. "These international lottery schemes frequently use co-conspirators in this country to perpetuate the fraud. The Department of Justice will continue to prosecute those who participate in these international based schemes."

Beginning in late 2015, Smith is alleged to have joined a conspiracy to commit mail and wire fraud, and to have committed wire fraud in furtherance of the conspiracy. According to the indictment, Smith received victims' money in the United States, kept a percentage of the money for her own benefit, and sent the rest of the victims' money to recipients in Jamaica and the United States. The indictment further alleges that Smith transported thousands of dollars in cash to Jamaica on multiple occasions, and gave the cash to a co-conspirator there. If convicted of conspiracy, Smith faces a statutory maximum term of 20 years in prison, a possible fine, and mandatory restitution. If convicted of wire fraud, she faces a statutory maximum term of 20 years in prison on each count.

"The Postal Inspection Service is dedicated to protecting Americans from fraudsters, whether they are committing the fraud from within the United States or abroad," said Inspector in Charge David W. Bosch of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service's Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Division. “We will continue to work with the Department of Justice to fight these lottery schemes, educate the public, and bring the offenders to justice.”

This indictment is part of the Department of Justice’s effort working with federal and other law enforcement to combat fraudulent lottery schemes in Jamaica preying on American citizens. According to the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, Americans have lost tens of millions of dollars to fraudulent foreign lotteries.

Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Mizer commended the investigative efforts of the Postal Inspection Service. The case is being prosecuted by Trial Attorney Raquel Toledo of the Civil Division’s Consumer Protection Branch.

An indictment merely alleges that crimes have been committed. All defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

For more information about the Consumer Protection Branch, visit its website at <http://www.justice.gov/civil/consumer-protection-branch>. For more information about the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Western District of North Carolina, visit its website at <https://www.justice.gov/usao-wdnc>.

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