

JUSTICE NEWS

Department of Justice

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District Court Enters Permanent Injunctions Shutting Down Two Groups of International Defendants Responsible for Multi-Million Dollar Mail Fraud Schemes

A federal court in New York entered consent decrees in two civil actions, permanently barring 14 individuals and entities from operating alleged multi-million dollar international mail-fraud schemes.

Both schemes followed a similar pattern, involving a complicated web of actors located across the world. Fraudulent “direct mailers” created letters falsely claiming that the recipient has won, or will soon win, cash or valuable prizes, or otherwise will come into good fortune. In order to collect these benefits, the letters say that the recipients need only send in a small amount of money for a processing fee. The letters appeared to come from legitimate sources, typically on official-looking letterhead, but were in fact fictitious individuals and organizations including “Baroness de Rothman,” “DNF Funds Office,” “Finkelstein & Partner,” the “Harrison Institute,” and Marie de Fortune. Moreover, even though the solicitations are in reality identical form letters sent to thousands or tens of thousands of recipients – the letters appear to be personally addressed.

“The Department of Justice is committed to protecting all Americans from fraud and exploitation,” Associate Attorney General Rachel Brand said. “This exploitation is repugnant and the Justice Department will pursue those who target our nation’s seniors and other vulnerable American consumers for financial gain. These consent decrees are just one example of the department’s broad efforts to protect seniors—and every American—from mail fraud.”

“The defendants preyed on the elderly and other vulnerable citizens through fictitious lotteries and other exploitive games, unfairly enriching themselves at the expense of these victims,” said Acting U.S. Attorney Bridget M. Rohde for the Eastern District of New York. “These consent decrees put the defendants out of the exploitation business. This Office is committed to pursuing the perpetrators and enablers of such schemes, in New York and abroad, to hold them accountable and to protect others from being swindled.”

“These actions are an important step in dismantling the many components of this fraudulent mass-mailing industry,” said Inspector in Charge Regina Faulkerson. “The Postal Inspection Service will continue to aggressively investigate everyone involved in facilitating these predatory mailings.”

United States v. BDK, et al.

The first case, in which consent decrees were entered on Nov. 21, 2017, names defendants located around the globe, including Swiss corporation BDK Mailing GmbH; Singapore companies Mailing Force Pte. Ltd. and Only Three Pte. Ltd; Chantal Seguy of France; Marion Elchlepp of France; Aurora Jouffroy-Brandtner of Switzerland; U.S. corporation Macromark Inc., Macromark employee Mary Ellen Meyer; Mail Order Solutions India Pvt. Ltd. (MOSI), an Indian corporation; and MOSI's owners, Dharti B. Desai of New York, New York, and Mehul A. Desai of India. The United States' complaint, filed in September 2016, alleges that the defendants' fraud scheme victimized hundreds of thousands of Americans, and targeted primarily the elderly and vulnerable. According to the complaint, the victims sent the defendants payments totaling \$50 to \$60 million annually between 2005 and 2016.

The consent decrees, entered yesterday in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York, resolve the litigation. As part of the consent decrees, defendants BDK Mailing GmbH, Mailing Force Pte. Ltd. and Only Three Pte. Ltd. (collectively "BDK") admit that they acted as "direct mailers" responsible for mailing millions of advertisements, solicitations, or promotional materials on behalf of dozens of fictitious psychics, sweepstakes, lotteries and other wealth-building programs (collectively "covered direct mailings") to hundreds of thousands of potential victims throughout the United States each year between 2005 and 2016. BDK further admits that the solicitations falsely promised that recipients would receive large sums of money, guaranteed money-making methods and/or powerful talismans in return for payment of a fee of \$50 to \$55. In reality, however, BDK admits the purported senders and the promised winnings were fictitious. Although victims sent the requested fees by cash, check or credit card, they received nothing in return. Defendants Macromark Inc. and Mary Ellen Meyer do not dispute that they facilitated BDK's rental of numerous "customer lists" containing hundreds of thousands of consumer names that would be used to address BDK's direct mailing campaigns. Defendant Mail Order Solutions Inc., in turn, would print millions of copies of BDK's covered direct mailings and deliver them via air cargo and international post into the United States for delivery to unwitting U.S. consumers.

United States v. Ercan Barka, et al.

The second case, in which consent decrees were entered Oct. 5, 2017, names defendants Ercan Barka, a resident of Turkey and New Jersey, Ryan Young of New Jersey, and True Vision LLC, a Delaware-based corporation. The United States' amended complaint, filed in May 2017, alleges that Barka and Young worked together as "direct mailers," sending fraudulent solicitations to hundreds of thousands of American victims through an international web of shell companies. The complaint alleges that Barka and Young's mailings informed recipients that they had won prizes including millions of dollars in cash and luxury cars, and that recipients would receive delivery of the prizes upon payment of a fee. Victims allegedly received nothing in return for their payments, while Young and Barka collected an estimated \$29 million from American victims from 2012 through 2016.

Under the consent decrees entered in both cases, the defendants may not use the U.S. mail to distribute fraudulent mailings or any mailings promoting similar schemes. The consent decrees also prevent the

defendants from printing, receiving, handling, opening, forwarding, or processing any such direct mailings. The defendants are also prohibited from creating, renting, or selling any lists of demographic information relating to consumers who have responded to defendants' or other certain direct mailings. Nor may the defendants process any payments received in response to certain direct mailings. Finally, the consent decrees authorize the U.S. Postal Inspection Service to return any victim money or personal checks sent to the defendants and detained by the Postal Inspection Service.

The United States' cases are being handled by Trial Attorneys Gabriel Scannapieco and Ann Entwistle of the Civil Division's Consumer Protection Branch, and Chief of Affirmative Civil Enforcement John Vagelatos and Assistant U.S. Attorney Thomas Price of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York, in coordination with the U.S. Postal Inspection Service.

Additional information on the original enforcement actions and mass mailing schemes is at: <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-and-law-enforcement-partners-announce-civil-and-criminal-actions-dismantle>. Additional information about the Consumer Protection Branch and its enforcement efforts may be found at <http://www.justice.gov/civil/consumer-protection-branch>. For more information about the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York, visit its website at <https://www.justice.gov/usao-edny>.

Attachment(s):

[Download Young Consent Decree and Final Judgment](#)

[Download Barka Consent Decree and Final Judgment](#)

[Download BDK Consent Decree and Final Judgment](#)

[Download Macromark Consent Decree and Final Judgment](#)

[Download Mosi Consent Decree and Final Judgment](#)

Topic(s):

Elder Justice

Component(s):

[Civil Division](#)

[USAO - New York, Eastern](#)

Press Release Number:

Fraudsters Allegedly Scammed Elderly Victims Out of Hundreds of Millions of Dollars

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