UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF OHIO
WESTERN DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,	:	**CASE NO.** 1:23CR-120
Plaintiff,	:	
	:	**JUDGE** J. COLE
v.	:	
	:	**INDICTMENT**
BENJAMIN ADU ACHEAMPONG,	:	
	:	**18 U.S.C. § 1001(a)(2)**
Defendant.	:	**18 U.S.C. § 1343**
	:	**18 U.S.C. § 1349**
	:	**18 U.S.C. § 1956(a)(1)(B)(i)**
	:	**18 U.S.C. § 1956(a)(2)(B)**
	:	
	:	**Forfeiture Allegations**

THE GRAND JURY CHARGES:

1. At times relevant to this Indictment, the defendant, **BENJAMIN ADU ACHEAMPONG**, was a resident of the Southern District of Ohio.

COUNT 1
(Conspiracy to Commit Mail Fraud and to Commit Wire Fraud)

The Conspiracy

2. Paragraph 1 of the Indictment is incorporated here.

3. From in or about January 2019 through in or about July 2021, in the Southern District of Ohio and elsewhere, the defendant, **BENJAMIN ADU ACHEAMPONG**, knowingly and intentionally conspired and agreed with others to commit the following offenses, that is:

a. to devise and intend to devise a scheme and artifice to defraud and to obtain money and property by means of materially false and fraudulent pretenses, representations, and promises, and for the purpose of executing the scheme and artifice, to knowingly

cause items to be delivered by U.S. Mail and by private and commercial interstate carrier, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1341; and

b. to devise and intend to devise a scheme to defraud, and to obtain money and property by means of materially false and fraudulent pretenses, representations, and promises, and for the purpose of executing the scheme and artifice, to knowingly transmit and cause to be transmitted by means of wire communication in interstate commerce writings, signs, signals, and pictures, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1343.

Purpose and Object of the Conspiracy

4. The purpose and object of the conspiracy was for the coconspirators, including **BENJAMIN ADU ACHEAMPONG**, to unlawfully enrich themselves by obtaining money by false and fraudulent pretenses.

Manner and Means of the Conspiracy

5. The manner and means by which the coconspirators, including **BENJAMIN ADU ACHEAMPONG**, sought to accomplish the objectives of the conspiracy included the following:

6. As part of and in furtherance of the conspiracy, members of the conspiracy created profiles on dating websites using false information and pictures of other individuals (the "False Profiles").

7. As part of and in furtherance of the conspiracy:

a. Members of the conspiracy used False Profiles to initiate contact with victims via the internet, pretending to be the person pictured in the False Profile.

b. Once members of the conspiracy initiated contact with a victim, they communicated with the victim by online instant messaging services, email, and telephone, among other ways. By expressing romantic interest in the victim, members of the conspiracy misled the victim into believing he or she was in a relationship with the person pictured in the False Profile.

c. Members of the conspiracy commonly represented to the victim that the person pictured in the False Profile was living abroad, or that there was some other justification for why the person pictured in the False Profile was never able to meet the victim in person.

d. Once the victim believed he or she was in a romantic relationship with the person pictured in the False Profile, members of the conspiracy made false representations to induce the victim to transfer money, or to mail checks, to members of the conspiracy, including to **BENJAMIN ADU ACHEAMPONG** in the Southern District of Ohio, by falsely representing that a person pictured in a False Profile was expecting a large inheritance of gold and needed financial assistance to bring it to the United States, that the person in the False Profile needed money for a plane ticket, or that the person in the False Profile needed money for medical expenses.

e. Members of the conspiracy commonly directed victims to mail checks, often for tens of thousands of dollars, to **BENJAMIN ADU ACHEAMPONG**.

f. Members of the conspiracy received more than $1 million in proceeds of the scheme in multiple bank accounts, including bank accounts opened in the name of ABA Automotive & Export LLC, an Ohio LLC created by **BENJAMIN ADU ACHEAMPONG**, and for which he was the sole registered agent.

g. The money the victims sent to the coconspirators was used by individuals other than those pictured in the False Profiles and for purposes other than those represented to the victims.

h. Members of the conspiracy laundered the proceeds of the scheme by making wire transfers, including to accounts in Africa, and falsely representing that the transfers were for, among other things, paying workers and family expenses.

All in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1349.

COUNT 2
(Wire Fraud)

8. Paragraphs 1 and 4 through 7 of the Indictment are incorporated here.

9. From in or about April 2020 through in or about July 2021, in the Southern District of Ohio and elsewhere, the defendant, **BENJAMIN ADU ACHEAMPONG**, and others known and unknown to the grand jury, knowingly, and with the intent to defraud, devised and willfully participated in the above-described scheme and artifice to defraud and obtain money by materially false and fraudulent pretenses, representations, and promises.

10. On or about May 12, 2020, in the Southern District of Ohio and elsewhere, for the purpose of executing the above-described scheme and artifice to defraud and deprive, the defendant, **BENJAMIN ADU ACHEAMPONG**, knowingly caused to be transmitted by means of wire communication in interstate commerce a writing, sign, signal, and picture, to wit: an email to R.M. reading "Yes that's correct. Thank you for letting me know."

All in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1343.

COUNTS 3-4
(International Money Laundering)

11. On or about the dates listed below, in the Southern District of Ohio and elsewhere, the defendant, **BENJAMIN ADU ACHEAMPONG**, did transmit and transfer funds, and cause funds to be transmitted and transferred, that is, the funds listed below, from a place in the United States to a place outside the United States, knowing that the funds involved in the

transmission and transfer represented the proceeds of some form of unlawful activity, and which funds, in fact, involved the proceeds of specified unlawful activity, namely, Mail Fraud in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1341 and Wire Fraud in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1343, and knowing that such transmission and transfer was designed in whole and in part to conceal and disguise the nature, location, source, ownership, and control of the proceeds of specified unlawful activity:

Count	Date, on or about	Transfer
3	6/2/20	Wire Transfer for $10,000 from the Chase Bank account with account number ending in 8712, with the memo line "Pls Make Sure You Pay The Worker Assoon As Possible Plsfamily"
4	6/5/20	Wire Transfer for $8,000 from the Chase Bank account with account number ending in 8712, with the memo line "Pls Make Sure You Pay The Worker Assoon As Possible Plsfamily Expenses"

In violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1956(a)(2)(B); *Pinkerton v. United States*, 328 U.S. 640 (1946).

COUNTS 5-6
(Concealment Money Laundering)

12. On or about the dates listed below, in the Southern District of Ohio and elsewhere, the defendant, **BENJAMIN ADU ACHEAMPONG**, did knowingly conduct and attempt to conduct a financial transaction affecting interstate and foreign commerce, that is, the transaction described below, which involved the proceeds of a specified unlawful activity, that is, Mail Fraud in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1341 and Wire Fraud in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1343, knowing that the transaction was designed in whole and in part to conceal and disguise the nature, location, source, ownership, and control of the proceeds of said specified unlawful activity and while conducting and attempting to conduct such financial transaction knew that

the property involved in the financial transaction represented the proceeds of some form of unlawful activity:

Count	Date, on or about	Transfer
5	7/17/20	Wire Transfer for $20,000 from the Chase Bank Account with account number ending in 0176, with the memo line "The Cars I Sold"
6	7/17/20	Wire Transfer for $15,000 from the Chase Bank Account with account number ending in 0176, with the memo line "The Cars I Sold For You"

In violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1956(a)(1)(B)(i); *Pinkerton v. United States*, 328 U.S. 640 (1946).

COUNT 7
(False Statement or Representation to an Agency of the United States)

13. On or about May 12, 2021, in the Southern District of Ohio and elsewhere, the defendant, **BENJAMIN ADU ACHEAMPONG**, did willfully and knowingly make a materially false, fictitious, and fraudulent statement and representation in a matter within the jurisdiction of the executive branch of the government of the United States by falsely stating in a Small Business Administration (SBA) Payment Protection Program (PPP) loan application, in sum and substance, that he was self-employed in the delivery business; that his business had $110,500.00 in gross income in 2020; that his business was in operation on February 15, 2020; and that the information provided in the application for a PPP loan and in all supporting documents and forms was true and accurate in all material respects. These statements and representations were false, because as the defendant, **BENJAMIN ADU ACHEAMPONG**, then and there knew, he was not self-employed in the delivery business; his alleged delivery business did not have $110,500.00 in gross income in 2020; his alleged delivery business was not in operation on February 15, 2020; and therefore the information provided in the application for a PPP loan and in all supporting documents and forms was not true and accurate in all

material respects. These statements and representations were also material in that the false statements to the SBA caused the SBA to approve the issuance of a $20,833 PPP loan to **BENJAMIN ADU ACHEAMPONG.**

In violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1001(a)(2) and 2.

FORFEITURE ALLEGATION 1

Upon conviction of any offense set forth in Counts 1 through 2 of this Indictment, the defendant, **BENJAMIN ADU ACHEAMPONG**, shall forfeit to the United States, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 981(a)(1)(C) and 28 U.S.C. § 2461(c), any property, real or personal, which constitutes or is derived from proceeds traceable to the violation(s), including but not limited to a sum of money equal to the amount of proceeds the defendant obtained as a result of the offense(s).

FORFEITURE ALLEGATION 2

Upon conviction of any offense set forth in Counts 3 through 6 of this Indictment, the defendant, **BENJAMIN ADU ACHEAMPONG**, shall forfeit to the United States, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 982(a)(1), any property, real or personal, involved in such offense(s), and any property traceable to such property, including but not limited to a sum of money equal to the amount of money involved in the offense(s).

SUBSTITUTE ASSETS

If any of the property described above, as a result of any act or omission of the defendant:

a. cannot be located upon the exercise of due diligence;

b. has been transferred or sold to, or deposited with, a third party;

c. has been placed beyond the jurisdiction of the court;

d. has been substantially diminished in value; or

e. has been commingled with other property which cannot be divided without difficulty,

it is the intent of the United States, pursuant to 21 U.S.C. § 853(p), as incorporated by 18 U.S.C. § 982(b)(1) or 28 U.S.C. § 2461(c), to seek forfeiture of any other property of the defendant, up to the value of the property described above.

A TRUE BILL.

/S/

FOREPERSON

KENNETH L. PARKER
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY

Julie D. Garcia

JULIE D. GARCIA
Assistant United States Attorney

eg