This Month at the WFO

A newsletter from the FBI Washington Field Office

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FBI Honors Internship Program Application Available

The FBI is accepting applications for the 2014 Honors Internship Program between January 29 and February 4. The 10-week program will run between June 1 and August 9, 2014, and presents a valuable opportunity for college students to work alongside special agents, intelligence analysts and professional staff while gaining career experience. Students can apply at www.fbijobs.gov.

Man Sentenced To 12 Years in Prison for Real Estate Fraud

Colin Conroy Williams, of Dayton, Md., was sentenced to 12 years in prison this month for serving as the mastermind of a multi-year conspiracy to commit real estate fraud. Williams' criminal activity involved fraudulently selling homes that did not belong to the purported property owner. Williams used a variety of means to identify the vulnerable properties, such as learning if the property had significant tax liabilities, if the true owners lacked a sophisticated understanding of real estate transactions, or if the true titleholder had died recently. Sometimes, Williams would visit the D.C. tax courts to identify properties with overdue property tax bills, which indicated that the rightful owner was not alive or able to pay. In other instances, Williams would use open source or subscription services, such as ancestry.com and the D.C. property tax database, to determine whether a particular property was owned by a recently deceased person. Williams would then manipulate the D.C. Probate Court process to have a co-conspirator appointed as a "personal representative" for the rightful owner and would arrange for that newly appointed representative to sell the property without the rightful owner's knowledge. In so doing, Williams stole multiple identities belonging to the living or recently deceased property owners. Once the properties were sold, Williams would keep the proceeds for himself, which he used to buy expensive cars and jewelry. All told, Williams defrauded numerous victims of more than $1,700,000 in losses.

Couple Sentenced for Sex Trafficking a 15-Year-Old Girl

This month, Stephanie Olean Chapman, of Fairfax, Va., and Ronnie Pierre Holmes were sentenced to 132 and 168 months in prison, respectively, for prostituting a 15-year-old girl throughout Northern Virginia, Maryland and Washington, D.C. Holmes pled guilty in June 2013 to conspiracy to commit sex trafficking of a child and Chapman was convicted by a federal jury in October 2013 of conspiracy to commit sex trafficking of a child, sex trafficking of a child, and interstate transportation of a minor for the purposes of prostitution. Between February 27 and March 12, 2013, Chapman and her boyfriend, Holmes, met a 15-year-old girl and recruited her to be a prostitute for them. During that time, Chapman and Holmes took sexually suggestive photographs of the girl, sent the photographs to potential customers, posted the photographs on Backpage.com, drove the girl to meet with customers, and took half of the money paid to the girl after she engaged in sex with customers.

Woodbridge Man Sentenced to 51 Months in Prison for Fraudulent Loan and Credit Schemes

Atef Mekki Haj Hassen, of Woodbridge, Va., was sentenced to 51 months in prison this month for wire fraud in connection with multiple fraudulent schemes to obtain bank financing, mortgage loans and credit cards. Hassen and his brother-in-law, Atef Ben Amor Amri, operated the New York Pizza Factory in Annandale and Fairfax, Va. In October 2005 and May 2007, Hassen and Amri obtained loans from BB&T Bank to remodel their first restaurant and to open at their second location, on which they defaulted. They evaded foreclosure by creating a sham transfer of the business to another person. In June 2008, Hassen obtained a loan from Acacia Federal Savings Bank by forging documents such as W-2 earnings, payroll and bank account statements to inflate his income and assets. Hassen also forged similar documents for others to use in obtaining mortgage loans and credit on their own behalf. Each of those associates has pled guilty and is awaiting sentencing.

Systems Administrator Pleads Guilty to Sabotaging Ex-Employer's Cloud-Computing Server

This month, Jonathan Hartwell Wolberg, of Tucson, Az., pled guilty to intentionally causing damage to a protected computer. Wolberg formerly worked as a systems administrator for a cloud-computing services provider headquartered in Northern Virginia. After resigning, Wolberg continued to enter the company's networks for the purpose of damaging its servers, its reputation, and its business. From March to August 2012, Wolberg encouraged the company's customers to leave and secretly logged into the company's server to issue a shutdown command to a key data server. As a result, he shut down the company's customer networks, making key information – including that of hospitals responsible for surgery and other urgent patient care – unavailable for at least several hours. Wolberg caused hundreds of thousands of dollars of damage as a result.