



This Month at the WFO

A newsletter from the FBI Washington Field Office

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WFO Fugitive Caught and Returned to U.S.

A fugitive wanted by WFO and the U.S. Secret Service has been caught. Earlier this month, [Tobechi Onwuhara](#) was caught and extradited from Australia after more than four years as a fugitive and brought to the U.S. to face charges. Onwuhara, 33, is accused of leading a home equity line of credit (HELOC) fraud scheme that attempted to steal more than \$38 million and caused approximately \$13 million in losses. Onwuhara was charged with conspiracy to commit bank fraud and a federal warrant was

issued for his arrest in Aug. 2008. He was later indicted by a federal grand jury and charged with 16 counts, including conspiracy, continuing financial crimes enterprises, bank fraud, aggravated identity theft, wire fraud, money laundering and computer fraud. Onwuhara is the alleged ringleader of a group of Nigerians who used fee-based web databases to search for potential victim account holders with large balances in HELOC accounts. The conspirators allegedly obtained credit reports on the victims in order to verify personal information and account balances then allegedly impersonated the victim and transferred the majority of the available money from the HELOC account into an account from which a wire transfer could be sent. The conspirators would then allegedly wire transfer hundreds of thousands of dollars to domestic or overseas accounts controlled by members of the conspiracy. Eight members of this alleged conspiracy have been convicted. If convicted, Onwuhara faces a mandatory minimum of 10 years and a maximum penalty of life in prison.

Sixth Anniversary of the Disappearance of Robert Levinson

This month marked the six year anniversary of the disappearance of Robert Levinson, a retired FBI agent who gave 28 years of service to the U.S. government. On March 8, 2007, Mr. Levinson traveled to Kish Island, Iran, as a private investigator. He has not been publicly seen or heard from since he went missing the following day on March 9, 2007. The FBI is responsible for investigating crimes committed against U.S. citizens abroad and has been conducting an investigation to locate Mr. Levinson since 2007. Last year, the FBI announced a reward of up to \$1 million for information leading directly to his safe location, recovery and return. That reward still remains unclaimed. For more information regarding Mr. Levinson, visit www.fbi.gov/levinson.



These images were e-mailed anonymously to the family of Robert Levinson in 2011.

Ashburn Man Sentenced for Ponzi Scheme Involving Purchase of Golf Course

Earlier this month, Brett Amendola, of Ashburn, Va., was sentenced to 84 months in prison and immediately taken into custody for carrying out a \$5 million Ponzi scheme involving his purported purchase of a golf course in Loudoun County, Va. The scheme resulted in losses of at least \$2.8 million to more than a dozen victims who had invested with Amendola. In April 2012, Amendola pleaded guilty to wire fraud and admitted that during 2010 and 2011, he persuaded various investors to provide him with short-term funding that would be held in escrow to fulfill a requirement by his lender to purchase the Beacon Hill Golf Course in Loudoun County. He promised that the money would be returned to the investors, with interest, in a matter of days. In reality, Amendola diverted the investors' money to his own use, including funding his and family members' trading accounts, making payments to investors in this and other schemes, and paying for personal expenses, including gambling. Amendola posed as a lawyer for the escrow account, leading investors to believe that they were wiring funds to accounts controlled by the escrow attorney. Instead, the financial accounts were controlled by Amendola and looted for his personal use.

Japanese Freight Forwarding Companies Plead Guilty to Criminal Price-Fixing Charges

Two Japanese air freight forwarding companies have agreed to plead guilty and to pay criminal fines totaling \$18.9 million for their roles in a conspiracy to fix certain fees in connection with the provision of air freight forwarding services for air cargo shipments from Japan to the U.S. This month, "K" Line Logistics Ltd. agreed to pay a \$3,507,246 criminal fine, and Yusen Logistics Co. Ltd. agreed to pay a \$15,428,207 criminal fine. As a result of this WFO investigation, 16 companies have either pleaded guilty or agreed to plead guilty and have agreed to pay criminal fines totaling more than \$120 million. Each company is charged with price fixing in violation of the Sherman Act, which carries a maximum \$100 million fine for corporations. [Details](#)

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