



Department of Justice

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Eastern District of North Carolina**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
TUESDAY, September 8, 2020
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Following Charges of Fraud, Raleigh Real Estate Developer Charged with Obstruction of Justice and Firearms Offenses

RALEIGH, N.C. – A federal grand jury returned a superseding indictment charging a Sanford man with Fraud, Money Laundering, Obstruction of Justice and firearms offenses. The charges were announced in federal court today during an initial appearance.

According to the first section of the superseding indictment, Joshua Matthew Houchins, 36, operated a number of real estate development companies in Raleigh between 2014 and 2018, including Rossshire Development LLC, Greenstone Ventures LLC, and Modern South Development LLC. The indictment charges that Houchins used these entities to carry out a fraud upon his real estate development investors.

According to the indictment, Houchins solicited investment monies by telling victims that their money would be “put to work” on a specific property, and further represented that the investments would be secured by deeds of trust filed with the county register of deeds. In fact, Houchins did not put all of the investor funds to work on the property on which the investor was solicited to invest, and instead, regularly used investor funds on other properties, or on personal expenses. Likewise, the investor promissory notes were not secured by a deed of trust as promised. In some instances, Houchins did not even own the property that was the subject of the investment, and as such, could not truthfully grant a deed of trust to the investor.

The indictment alleges that after Houchins diverted investor money away from the property on which the funds were supposed to be spent, Houchins failed to develop and sell the properties, as he represented he would. Houchins then defaulted on the notes by failing to pay investors their promised returns. The investors were unable to foreclose upon the investment properties because Houchins had not secured the promissory notes with a deed of trust filed, thereby resulting in losses to the investors.

According to the second part of the superseding indictment, the grand jury began to investigate Houchins in 2018 concerning the aforementioned offenses. Following the issuance of subpoenas to his attorney and to his various real estate companies, Houchins only produced a small number of documents to the grand jury. Instead, the indictment alleges that Houchins admitted in a February 2020 letter that he had “destroyed all of the evidence.”

The superseding indictment also alleges that Houchins, who had recently separated from his wife, began to send her harassing messages. The indictment alleges that Houchins’ wife obtained a Domestic Violence Protection Order (DVPO) barring Houchins from contacting, threatening or harassing his wife. While

Houchins was already prohibited from possessing a firearm due to his status as a convicted felon, the DVPO further prohibited Houchins from possessing a firearm.

The superseding indictment then alleges that in March of 2020, Houchins communicated to friends of his wife that she had “run to the police” and that Houchins has “no mercy on a lying rat.” Around one month later, the superseding indictment alleges that Houchins sent threatening communications to friends and family of his wife, including photographs of Houchins wearing a mask and tactical vest.

The superseding indictment then charges that, following his internet searches for “killing your wife over love,” Houchins was arrested. At the time of his arrest, Houchins was in possession of a Ruger AR-15, 4 magazines, a double canister magazine containing 100 rounds of ammunition, two boxes of .223-caliber ammunition, and a tactical vest.

Houchins is charged with nine counts of Wire Fraud, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1343, each of which carry a punishment of up to 20 years in prison. Houchins is charged with three counts of Conducting Monetary Transactions in Criminally Derived Property, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1957, each of which carry a punishment of up to 10 years in prison. Count 13 of the Superseding Indictment charges Obstruction of Justice, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1512(c)(1), which carries a maximum punishment of up to 20 years in prison. Lastly, Houchins is charged with Felon in Possession of a Firearm, and Possession of Firearm by Person Subject with a DVPO, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 922(g)(1) and (g)(8). Both of these offenses carry a maximum punishment of up to 10 years in prison.

Houchins detention hearing hearing is scheduled for September 11, 2020.

Robert J. Higdon, Jr., U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of North Carolina made the announcement. The Federal Bureau of Investigation and the North Carolina Secretary of State are investigating the case. The Wake County Sheriff’s Office, Apex Police Department, and Sanford Police Department, also provided assistance. Assistant U.S. Attorney William M. Gilmore is prosecuting the case.

An indictment is merely an accusation. The defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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