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David Markiewicz The Atlanta Journal-Constitution



Man gets 20 years for ripping off elderly in scam



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STORY HIGHLIGHTS

"He's come in this country, and he's used this country," the judge said. "He's contributed nothing."



Victims were convinced to wire money into accounts a man from Nigeria controlled.



Some victims were led to believe that the person calling them was a grandchild who needed money for bail.



A man has been sentenced to 20 years in prison for his part in a scam in which thousands of dollars were stolen from the elderly.

Joseph Dada Akintoye, 34, of Nigeria, was convicted Wednesday in Cobb County Superior Court of 15 charges, including racketeering, money laundering, theft by taking, theft by deception and exploitation of elder persons.

An international organization Akintoye belonged to called elderly people or contacted them online and convinced them to wire money into accounts he controlled, Kim Isaza, the spokeswoman for Cobb District Attorney Vic Reynolds, said in an emailed statement.

According to that statement, some victims were led to believe that the person calling them was a grandchild who was in jail in another state and needed the money for bail. Another victim was contacted by a man on Match.com and led to think she was helping with a foreign financial deal.

Three victims, none of them in Georgia, wired nearly \$50,000 into an account held by a Marietta woman who was an associate of Akintoye, Isaza said. He told her how to launder the funds and how to shift them between various accounts.

Hundreds of thousands of dollars from other unidentified victims moved through the accounts of the Marietta woman, Isaza said. Some of the money was sent to Akintoye's own account in Jacksonville, Fla., while most of it went to Nigeria and Malaysia.

"This is absolutely racketeering," Cobb Superior Court Judge Adele Grubbs said before sentencing Akintoye. "He's one of the kingpins, and he should pay. He's come in this country, and he's used this country. He's contributed nothing."

The last three years of Akintoye's sentence will be suspended if he pays \$35,000 restitution within one year. He was also fined \$50,000.

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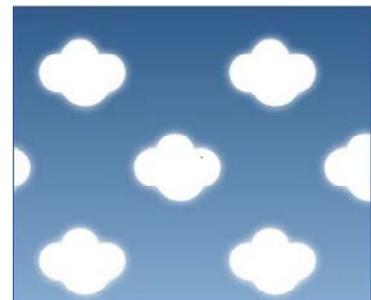
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