

20cr231 JRT/BRT

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF MINNESOTA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff,

v.

- (1) DANIEL MATHIAS,
also known as "Chris Matthews,"
- (2) VASEAN BERIOISOVA RICKS,
also known as "Joan Poole,"
- (3) DIANA REPELL LOGAN,
also known as "Frances Reed,"
- (4) IVORY DENISE ALEXANDER,
also known as "Carol Mason,"
- (5) ANGEL WILSON,
also known as "Ashley Lee,"
- (6) SHARON DENISE McEWEN,
also known as "Lisa Lane,"
- (7) RONALD OLLO COLEMAN, and
- (8) RITA ANTOINETTE ALBRITTON,

INDICTMENT

18 U.S.C. § 1349

18 U.S.C. § 1343

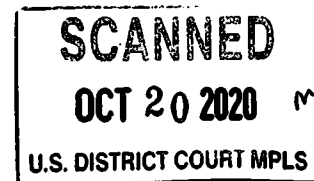
18 U.S.C. § 2326

Defendants.

THE UNITED STATES GRAND JURY CHARGES:

OVERVIEW

1. Over the past decade, the defendants devised and carried out a scheme that defrauded more than 13,000 victims—many of whom were elderly and vulnerable—across the United States. The scheme targeted people who had previously fallen victim to a fraudulent magazine sales scam and been tricked into signing up for multiple expensive magazine subscriptions they did not want and could not afford. The defendants took advantage of the victims' desperation to make the magazine subscriptions stop. They called victims pretending to be from the "magazine



cancellation department.” The defendants offered to pay off the victims’ “outstanding balance” and cancel their existing magazine subscriptions in exchange for a large, lump-sum payment. None of this was true. In reality, the victims did not owe the defendants or their companies any money. And the defendants had no power or ability to cancel the victims’ existing magazine subscriptions or any outstanding balance owed to any other magazine companies. The offer was fraudulent and the defendants simply stole the money paid by their victims. In all, the defendants defrauded their victims out of approximately \$4.5 million.

COUNT 1

(Conspiracy to Commit Mail Fraud)

2. At times relevant to this Indictment:

a. Defendant DANIEL MATHIAS owned and operated Online Reading Club Inc., a Mississippi company purportedly in the business of selling magazine subscription packages to customers throughout the United States. Online Reading Club Inc. also did business under the names Readers Pros and Online Reading Pros. Defendant MATHIAS and his company ran a telemarketing call center in Oxford, Mississippi.

b. Defendants VASEAN RICKS, DIANA LOGAN, IVORY ALEXANDER, ANGEL WILSON, and SHARON McEWEN worked as telemarketers for defendant MATHIAS at his call center in Oxford, Mississippi.

c. Defendant RONALD COLEMAN owned and operated World Wide Publication Inc. and Unaversal Magazine, Georgia companies purportedly in the business of selling magazine subscription packages to customers throughout the

United States. World Wide Publication Inc. and Unaversal Magazine were located in Powder Springs, Georgia.

d. Defendant RITA ALBRITTON worked as a telemarketer for World Wide Publication and Unaversal Magazine.

3. From at least in or about 2011 through in or about 2020, in the State and District of Minnesota, and elsewhere, the defendants,

DANIEL MATHIAS,
also known as "Chris Matthews,"
VASEAN BERIOISOVA RICKS,
also known as "Joan Poole,"
DIANA REPELL LOGAN,
also known as "Frances Reed,"
IVORY DENISE ALEXANDER,
also known as "Carol Mason,"
ANGEL WILSON,
also known as "Ashley Lee,"
SHARON DENISE McEWEN,
also known as "Lisa Lane,"
RONALD OLLO COLEMAN, and
RITA ANTOINETTE ALBRITTON,

did knowingly conspire with each other, and others known and unknown to the grand jury, to devise a scheme and artifice to defraud and to obtain money by materially false and fraudulent pretenses, representations, and promises, in connection with the conduct of telemarketing that victimized ten or more persons over the age of 55, and for the purpose of executing such scheme and artifice, caused the sending, delivering, and receipt of various matters and things by United States Postal Service and private and commercial interstate carrier, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1341, 1349, and 2326.

Overview and Purpose of the Conspiracy

4. The purpose of the conspiracy was to defraud consumers who had previously been tricked into signing up for multiple expensive magazine subscription packages they did not want. The defendants called victim-consumers around the country and fraudulently offered to cancel their existing subscriptions and pay off an “outstanding balance” in exchange for a large, lump-sum payment. In reality, the victim-consumers did not owe the defendants or their companies any money and the defendants had no power or authority to stop or cancel the victim-consumers’ ongoing subscriptions. The offer was fraudulent and any money paid by the victim-consumers was simply stolen by the defendants.

Defendants and Their Roles

5. **Company Owners:** Defendants DANIEL MATHIAS and RONALD COLEMAN owned and operated the companies and call centers that carried out this telemarketing fraud scheme. Defendants MATHIAS and COLEMAN provided lead lists and fraudulent sales scripts to their telemarketing employees for use in carrying out the fraud scheme. Defendants MATHIAS and COLEMAN maintained credit card merchant accounts through which they billed the victim-consumers who were defrauded by their scheme.

6. **Telemarketers:** Defendants VASEAN RICKS, DIANA LOGAN, IVORY ALEXANDER, ANGEL WILSON, SHARON McEWEN, and RITA ALBRITTON (the “Telemarketers”) were Telemarketers who made fraudulent sales calls to victim-consumers across the United States.

Manner and Means of the Conspiracy

7. The defendants were involved in a fraud scheme that took advantage of victim-consumers who had been previously defrauded by multiple magazine companies. The victim-consumers had been “sold” magazine subscriptions they did not want and did not knowingly sign up for. The victim-consumers were being billed by multiple other magazine sales companies—as many as ten magazine companies at a time. Many of these victim-consumers were elderly and otherwise vulnerable. They were desperate to cancel their magazines.

8. The defendants called the victim-consumers and fraudulently represented that they were calling with an offer to cancel unwanted magazine subscriptions and pay off any outstanding balance in exchange for a large, one-time payment. In reality, the victim-consumers did not owe COLEMAN, MATHIAS, or their companies any money and they had no power or authority to stop or cancel the victim-consumers’ ongoing subscriptions.

9. It was part of the scheme that defendants COLEMAN and MATHIAS purchased sales lead lists of consumers with existing magazine subscriptions through other companies. Many of the people on these lead lists had been previously victimized by other fraudulent magazine companies.

10. Defendants MATHIAS and COLEMAN then directed their telemarketing employees, including defendants RICKS, LOGAN, ALEXANDER, WILSON, McEWEN, and ALBRITTON, to call the victim-consumers on the lead lists using fraudulent sales scripts. The scripts directed the Telemarketers to falsely claim that the victim-consumers owed a large outstanding balance for existing magazine

subscriptions. The scripts then directed the Telemarketers to fraudulently offer to pay off that balance in exchange for a lump-sum payment.

11. Defendants MATHIAS, RICKS, LOGAN, ALEXANDER, WILSON, and McEWEN fraudulently offered to pay off this fictitious balance in exchange for a one-time payment of \$507. Defendants COLEMAN and ALBRITTON fraudulently offered to pay off this fictitious balance in exchange for a one-time payment of either \$199.90 or \$299.90. In reality, the victim-consumers did not have any existing subscriptions with the companies, did not owe the companies any outstanding balance, and the companies did not have the ability to cancel the victim-consumers' ongoing magazine subscriptions. The defendants did not call the victim-consumers to help them pay off an existing balance at a reduced price. They called to defraud them. When victim-consumers paid the money, their subscriptions were not cancelled and any balance they owed to other magazine sales companies remained. The money collected by the defendants was simply stolen.

12. During some of these calls, defendants RICKS, LOGAN, ALEXANDER, WILSON, and McEWEN and other sales representatives offered sympathy to the victim-consumers and purported to be helping them put a stop to the fraudulent magazine subscriptions that had been plaguing them for years. During other calls, they became aggressive and threatened legal action or other consequences if the victim-consumer did not agree to make the payment. In either case, the script preyed upon the desperation and fear of the elderly and other vulnerable victims who had been caught up in the cycle of fraud.

13. It was further part of the scheme that the defendants sent confirmation letters via the U.S. Postal System to victims across the United States, including to victims in Minnesota. These letters falsely and fraudulently purported to confirm the cancellation of the victim-consumers' existing magazine subscriptions and outstanding balance.

14. During the course of their scheme, defendant MATHIAS and COLEMAN's companies defrauded more than 13,000 victims across the United States. In all, they received nearly \$4.5 million from the victims of their scheme. All in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1349 and 2326.

Counts 2-10
(Wire Fraud)

15. The allegations in paragraphs 1 through 14 of Count 1 are incorporated herein.

16. From at least in or about 2011 through in or about 2020, in the State and District of Minnesota, and elsewhere, the defendants,

DANIEL MATHIAS,
also known as "Chris Matthews,"
VASEAN BERIOISOVA RICKS,
also known as "Joan Poole,"
DIANA REPELL LOGAN,
also known as "Frances Reed,"
IVORY DENISE ALEXANDER,
also known as "Carol Mason,"
ANGEL WILSON,
also known as "Ashley Lee,"
SHARON DENISE McEWEN,
also known as "Lisa Lane,"
RONALD OLLO COLEMAN, and
RITA ANTOINETTE ALBRITTON,

and others known and unknown to the grand jury, and in connection with the conduct of telemarketing that victimized ten or more persons over the age of 55, did knowingly devise and participate in a scheme and artifice to defraud and to obtain money by means of materially false and fraudulent pretenses, representations, and promises, and by concealment of material facts.

17. On or about the dates listed below, in the State and District of Minnesota and elsewhere, the defendants, as set forth below, for the purpose of executing the scheme described above, knowingly caused to be transmitted by means of a wire communication in interstate commerce, certain writings, signs, signals, and sounds, including the following:

Count	Defendants	Date (on or about)	Wire Details
2	COLEMAN, ALBRITTON	June 14, 2017	A phone call from an employee of World Wide Publications in Georgia to Victim Sandra S. in Minnesota
3	COLEMAN, ALBRITTON	July 7, 2017	A phone call from an employee of World Wide Publications in Georgia to Victim Sandra S. in Minnesota
4	MATHIAS, RICKS, LOGAN, ALEXANDER, WILSON, McEWEN	July 11, 2018	A phone call from LOGAN in Mississippi to Victim Caroline W. in Minnesota
5	MATHIAS, COLEMAN	July 16, 2019	An email with the subject line "Files Available!!!" from a lead broker in Georgia to several magazine telemarketing company owners, including MATHIAS, COLEMAN, and Tim Hanssen in Minnesota
6	MATHIAS, RICKS, LOGAN, ALEXANDER,	July 23, 2019	A phone call from RICKS in Mississippi to an undercover Postal Inspector in Minnesota posing as "Rose Cubur"

	WILSON, McEWEN		
7	MATHIAS, RICKS, LOGAN, ALEXANDER, WILSON, McEWEN	December 4, 2019	A phone call from LOGAN in Mississippi to an undercover Postal Inspection Service employee in Minnesota posing as “Goldie Ruscoe”
8	MATHIAS, RICKS, LOGAN, ALEXANDER, WILSON, McEWEN	December 9, 2019	A phone call from ALEXANDER in Mississippi to an undercover FBI agent in Minnesota posing as “Scott Kyle”
9	MATHIAS, RICKS, LOGAN, ALEXANDER, WILSON, McEWEN	December 9, 2019	A phone call from MATHIAS in Mississippi to an undercover FBI agent in Minnesota posing as “Scott Kyle”
10	MATHIAS, RICKS, LOGAN, ALEXANDER, WILSON, McEWEN	January 6, 2020	A phone call from McEWEN in Mississippi to an undercover Postal Inspector posing as “Richard Loosle”

All in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1343 and 2326.

FORFEITURE ALLEGATIONS

18. Counts 1 through 10 of this Indictment are incorporated by reference for the purpose of alleging forfeiture pursuant to Title 18, United States Code, Section 981(a)(1)(C) in conjunction with Title 28, United States Code, Section 2461(c), and Title 18, United States Code, Section 982(a)(8).

19. If convicted of any of Counts 1 through 10 of this Indictment, the defendants shall forfeit to the United States, pursuant to Title 18, United States Code, Section 981(a)(1)(C) and Title 28, United States Code, Section 2461(c), any

property, real or personal, which constitutes or is derived from proceeds traceable to Counts 1 through 10 of the Indictment.

20. If convicted of any of Counts 1 through 10 of this Indictment, the defendants shall also forfeit to the United States, pursuant to Title 18, United States Code, Section 982(a)(8), any real or personal property used or intended to be used to commit, facilitate, or promote the commission of the mail and wire fraud schemes alleged in Counts 1 through 10 of the Indictment.

21. The property subject to forfeiture includes, but is not limited to:

- a. \$22,368.96 seized from Wells Fargo account number 1833866021, in the name of World Wide Publications Inc.;
- b. \$13.14 seized from Wells Fargo account No. 6115171305, in the name of "Unaversal Maginze, Inc.";
- c. \$21.57 seized from Wells Fargo account number 6833871327, in the name of World Wide Publications Inc.; and
- d. \$1,679.00 in U.S. currency seized from Daniel Mathias on February 19, 2020.

22. If any of the above-described property is unavailable for forfeiture, the United States intends to seek the forfeiture of substitute property as provided for in Title 21, United States Code, Section 853(p), as incorporated by Title 28, United States Code, Section 2461(c) and Title 18, United States Code, Section 982(b).

23. Counts 1 through 10 of this Indictment are incorporated by reference for the purpose of alleging forfeiture pursuant to Title 18, United States Code, Section 981(a)(1)(C) in conjunction with Title 28, United States Code, Section 2461(c).

24. If convicted of any of Counts 1 through 10 of this Indictment, the defendant shall forfeit to the United States, pursuant to Title 18, United States Code,

Section 981(a)(1)(C) and Title 28, United States Code, Section 2461(c), any property, real or personal, which constitutes or is derived from proceeds traceable to Counts 1 through 10 of the Indictment.

25. If any of the above-described property is unavailable for forfeiture, the United States intends to seek the forfeiture of substitute property as provided for in Title 21, United States Code, Section 853(p), as incorporated by Title 28, United States Code, Section 2461(c).

A TRUE BILL

UNITED STATES ATTORNEY

FOREPERSON