



# SIGTARP

Office of the Special Inspector General  
For The Troubled Asset Relief Program

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## **CONMAN SENTENCED TO 10 YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON IN FRAUD SCHEME THAT COST VICTIMS NEARLY TWO MILLION**

A man with a criminal history going back nearly five decades has been sentenced to 120 months in federal prison for masterminding a series of fraud schemes that cost victims nearly \$2 million. Jerome Arthur Whittington, 68, received the 10-year sentence late Monday from United States District Judge Jesus G. Bernal, who said the defendant had “ruined the lives of some of the victims.”

Whittington was sentenced after pleading guilty in May 2016 to 33 counts of conspiracy, wire fraud and passport fraud. Whittington orchestrated a series of fraud schemes in which he posed as various figures, including a former federal prosecutor, a successful attorney, a special agent with the FBI, and a wealthy real estate investor.

“Whittington’s criminal conduct was exceptional – the sheer volume and breadth of his fraudulent conduct is unlike anything I’ve seen from the bench,” Judge Bernal said on Monday.

In one of the schemes, Whittington posed as an attorney and falsely promised a victim that he could help the victim recover losses suffered after investing in two bogus companies. Whittington claimed he was able to seize assets from the two fraudulent companies, but the victim needed to provide money that would be used to “post bonds” that were required prior to seizing the assets. After Whittington falsely claimed that he had obtained a \$4 million judgment, Whittington told the victim that representatives from the companies and other victims were very angry and that he should leave the country to avoid confrontations and harassment.

As a result of this “reloading” scheme, the victim paid Whittington approximately \$290,000 to recover the losses – but Whittington simply spent the money on personal expenses, which included making payments to other victims of his schemes.

During the sentencing hearing, the victim told Judge Bernal that Whittington “ruined” his life by stealing retirement savings he had built up during a 40-year career.

In imposing the sentence, Judge Bernal said: “Whittington’s criminal history of defrauding people spanned from 1971 – 47 years. Most people recidivate less when they become older. But Whittington started the [latest] schemes while he was in the sixties.”

Once he completes the prison, Whittington will be on supervised release for seven years. Judge Bernal also ordered that Whittington is responsible for paying nearly \$1.7 million in restitution to the victims.

Two criminal cases against Whittington were part of an investigation conducted by SIGTARP and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. This matter was handled by Assistant United States Attorney Jerry C. Yang of the Riverside Branch Office.

#### **About SIGTARP**

The Office of the Special Inspector General for the Troubled Asset Relief Program (SIGTARP) is a federal law enforcement agency that targets crime at financial institutions or in TARP housing programs and is an independent watchdog protecting the interests of the America people. SIGTARP investigations have resulted in the recovery of \$10 billion and 262 defendants sentenced to prison.

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