



Five Defendants Charged in \$8.4 Million “Boiler Room” Fraud and Money Laundering Scheme

The Defendants Operated Boiler Rooms Overseas and Shell Companies in the United States to Defraud Victims Around the World of Millions of Dollars

February 16, 2022

The Joint Chiefs of Global Tax Enforcement (J5) welcomed the unsealing of an indictment Feb. 9th charging Robert Lenard Booth, Michael D’Urso, Alyssa D’Urso, Jay Garnock, and Antonella Chiaramonte with conspiracy to commit securities fraud. Additional charges include the operation of an unlicensed money transmitting businesses, conspiracy to commit wire fraud, conspiracy to commit money laundering, and operation of unlicensed money transmitting businesses, in connection with a scheme to defraud victim investors in countries around the world and launder the proceeds of the fraud.

The indictment alleges that beginning in at least June 2019 and lasting through August 2021, Booth, Michael and Alyssa D’Urso, Garnock and Chiaramonte participated in a sophisticated international mass-marketing investment fraud scheme to defraud investors from around the world of millions of dollars, and to launder the fraud proceeds and distribute those proceeds among the conspirators.

Booth ran a boiler room operation in Thailand that lied to investors and told them the boiler room was in fact a Manhattan-based investment firm. Booth and his co-conspirators propped up their lies with fake identities and false and misleading webpages, email addresses, and phone numbers. While purporting to sell investors from around the world securities in privately held and publicly traded American companies, Booth stole more than \$1 million from victim-investors, depriving them of their savings.

Michael and Alyssa D’Urso, Garnock and Chiaramonth ran a network of shell companies and associated bank accounts in New York. Using these shell companies, the D’Urso Crew partnered with multiple boiler rooms, including Booth’s, to receive the stolen “investment” funds from victims and then launder the money and distribute it to the various conspirators. All told, the D’Urso Crew used its shell companies to receive more than \$8.4 million that was stolen from victims of the scheme. They then used their shell companies to launder more than \$4.6 million of the stolen money and send it back overseas.

“Criminals have become extremely sophisticated in preying on unsuspecting victims, and this alleged boiler room scheme is no exception. This team of fraudsters allegedly went to great lengths to create fake marketing materials, fake contact information, and fake companies to dupe victim-investors and then laundered the funds for personal gain. This case demonstrates that IRS-Criminal Investigation, and its law enforcement partners like Homeland Security Investigations, will work across the globe to track down perpetrators of financial crimes,” said IRS-CI Special Agent in Charge Thomas Fattorusso.

“Hiding behind fake investment firms and a network of shell companies, these defendants preyed on victims around the world and cheated them of their hard-earned savings. In selling their victims fake investments in American companies, the defendants abused the confidence and trust that investors worldwide have in American securities and American banks. Thanks to the tireless efforts of our law enforcement partners, these defendants now find themselves in hot water, being held accountable for their crimes,” said U.S. Attorney Damian Williams.

“This case is an example of how HSI is uniquely positioned to disrupt transnational criminal organizations allegedly profiting from cross-border crime. Thanks to the partnership with HSI and IRS-CI, an international criminal conspiracy has been stopped,” said Homeland Security Investigations Tampa Special Agent in Charge John Condon.

Booth, Alyssa D’Urso, Garnock and Chiaramonte are each charged with one count of conspiracy to commit securities fraud and operate unlicensed money transmitting businesses, one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud, and one count of conspiracy to commit money laundering. Michael D’Urso is further charged with three counts, and Alyssa D’Urso, Garnock and Chiaramonte are further charged with one count each, of operating an unlicensed money transmitting business.

IRS-CI and the Dutch Fiscal Information and Investigation Service (FIOD), both members of the J5, played significant roles in this ongoing investigation.

The J5 leads the fight against international tax crime and money laundering, including cryptocurrency threats and those who undertake, enable or facilitate global tax evasion. They work together to gather information, share intelligence and conduct coordinated operations against transnational financial crimes. The J5 includes the Australian Taxation Office, the Canadian Revenue Agency, the Dutch Fiscal Information and Investigation Service, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs from the U.K. and IRS-CI from the U.S. The J5 was formed in 2018 after a call to arms from the OECD Taskforce on Tax Crime.

For more information about the J5, please visit www.irs.gov/j5.

