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QUEENS MAN CHARGED WITH SCAMMING MORE THAN \$600,000
FROM SENIORS ACROSS U.S.

Accused of Opening Bogus Corporate Bank Accounts in Queens to Collect Stolen Money

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced that Fei Liang was charged with possession of stolen property in connection with a scheme that defrauded \$628,278 from senior citizens across the country. Liang is alleged to have worked with a co-conspirator who called seniors and claimed to be from the Social Security Administration, their bank, or a vendor. He told the victims their accounts had been compromised and instructed the seniors to wire money to other accounts for “safekeeping.”

District Attorney Katz said: “At a time in their lives when they should be able to enjoy the fruits of their hard work, seniors are often victimized by ruthless scammers who leave them in financial ruin. We will continue to aggressively prosecute fraudsters and work to educate the public on how to defend against these predators.”

Homeland Security Investigations New York Acting Special Agent in Charge Erin Keegan said: “The defendant is accused of preying on the insecurities of vulnerable individuals who believed their Social Security numbers or other personal accounts had been compromised. As alleged, his deplorable crimes cost elderly victims upwards of \$620,000 before he could be stopped. I commend HSI New York’s El Dorado Task Force Economic Crimes Group, the Queens District Attorney’s Office, HSI Baltimore and our law enforcement partners for their outstanding coordination. Today and always, we urge the public to be cautious of opportunists seeking to exploit their fears.”

Liang, 39, of 45th Avenue in Flushing, was arraigned on a complaint charging him with six counts of criminal possession of stolen property in the second degree and one count of attempted criminal possession of stolen property in the second degree.

Liang faces up to 15 years in prison if convicted. Judge Jeffrey Gershuny ordered him to return to court April 10.

According to the charges, Liang opened bogus corporate accounts, under the names JMG Aluminum, Inc., and New Century Aluminum, Inc., at three Queens banks: a TD Bank in Flushing and Capital One and Chase banks in Bayside. Liang listed himself as the president of the aluminum companies.

Between October 2022 and March 2023, wire transfers totaling \$628,278.44 were made to Liang’s bank accounts from six victims as follows:

- On October 5, 2022, a victim from Trumbull, Connecticut, wired \$190,000 after he received a pop-up message on his computer advising him to call Microsoft at a particular number. When the victim called, he was told that fraudulent activity had been observed on his computer and his bank account may have been compromised. To safeguard his money, the victim was advised to wire funds to another account—one that had been opened by Liang at a TD Bank in Flushing. That same day, withdrawals were made from the TD account.
- On January 31, 2023, a victim from Miami wired \$96,300 after he was contacted by an individual purporting to be a Wells Fargo fraud investigator claiming someone had attempted to wire money from his account, which was now “contaminated.” The victim was instructed to wire money to a different account for safekeeping. He sent money to an account opened by Liang at a Capital One Bank branch in Bayside. The next day, most of the money – \$90,522 – was wired to a bank in Hong Kong.
- On February 3, 2023, a victim from Port Richey, Florida, wired \$48,968.44 to an account Liang had opened at a Capital One branch in Bayside after he was contacted by an individual purporting to be from Amazon saying there were fraudulent purchases on his account. Although the victim did not have an Amazon account, he was told he would be held liable nonetheless for the fraudulent transactions if he did not wire money to “prove his innocence.” Several transfers from the Capital One account were made to a bank in Hong Kong.
- On March 16, 2023, a victim from Hartford, Wisconsin, wired \$98,000 to an account Liang had opened at a Chase branch in Bayside after he was contacted by someone claiming to be from the bank’s fraud department. The caller instructed him to wire the money to a “safe account” because his personal information had been compromised. The next day, the money deposited into the Chase account was wired to a China Merchants Bank in China.
- On March 16, 2023, a victim from Rancho Santa Margarita, California, wired \$98,000 to an account Liang had opened at a Chase Bank in Bayside after she had been contacted by an individual purporting to be from the Social Security Administration who threatened her with arrest if she did not send money. The next day, money was wired from the Chase account to a China Merchants Bank in China.
- On March 30, 2023, a victim from Delray Beach, Florida, wired \$97,010 to an account Liang had opened at a Chase branch in Bayside after he was contacted by someone saying they were from the Social Security Administration and that his bank account and Social Security number had been compromised. The caller told the victim that, in order to safeguard his money, he needed to move the money into a different account.
- Records show that from March 28, 2023, to May 1, 2023, Liang made withdrawals totaling \$40,700 from the bogus corporate account he opened with Chase.

On February 25, Liang was arrested in Maryland inside the MGM National Harbor Hotel and Casino, where, records show, he bet more than \$2.5 million over a six-month period.

On March 7, Liang was extradited to Queens to face charges.

The investigation was conducted by officers assigned to HSI New York's El Dorado Task Force Economic Crimes Group, specifically Detective Michael McCaffrey of the NYPD Financial Crimes Task Force/Homeland Security Investigations, and Special Agent Nicholas Yannazzo, of the Social Security Administration, Office of the Inspector General, New York Region.

The investigation was assisted by Jade K. Wilson, trial prep assistant, of the Frauds Bureau of the Queens District Attorney's Office.

Assistant District Attorney Hana Kim, Deputy Chief of the District Attorney's Frauds Bureau, is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Joseph T. Conley III, Bureau Chief, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Gerard Brave.

Criminal complaints and indictments are accusations. A defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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