



# Department of Justice

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## **MARIETTA MAN SENTENCED FOR INTERNET FRAUD SCHEME**

### ***Nigerian National To Serve Over Two Years, Then Be Deported***

Atlanta, GA - JOSEPH UDOGU, 34, of Marietta, Georgia, was sentenced today by United States District Judge Thomas W. Thrash, Jr. on charges that he and unknown others used the internet to commit mail and wire fraud.

“This defendant and his co-conspirators used mass emails sent via the internet to find unsuspecting victims who were defrauded of thousands of dollars,” said United States Attorney David E. Nahmias. “In this case the fraudsters convinced the victims to give them their bank account information, so that bogus checks could be deposited into the victims’ bank accounts by the conspirators. At the conspirators direction, the victims then withdrew cash from their accounts and sent it to the conspirators’ before they realized that the checks were fraudulent. Members of the public should be wary of any email solicitation in which either their bank account information is requested or the use of their bank account to deposit checks is requested.”

UDOGU was sentenced to 2 years, 3 months in federal prison to be followed by 3 years of supervised release, and ordered to pay \$154,155 in restitution to the victims. The judge also ordered that UDOGU be deported to his native country of Nigeria after he serves his prison sentence. UDOGU was convicted of these charges on August 25, 2006.

According to United States Attorney Nahmias and the information presented in court: UDOGU and his co-conspirators sent out mass email solicitations purportedly offering employment opportunities or a financial gift from a wealthy person. Respondents to the emails were advised that they would have to pay fees in advance in order to obtain employment or receive the offered funds. If the respondents could not pay the fees in advance, they were told the fees could be paid for them. The respondents were asked for their bank account information so that checks could be deposited into their accounts. After the checks, which turned out to be counterfeit, were deposited into the respondents’ accounts, the respondents were instructed to wire transfer via Western Union the proceeds from the checks to persons in Marietta, Georgia. UDOGU, using a number of aliases, would sign for the wire transfers at Western Union locations and

convert the proceeds of the wire transfers to cash. After the transactions were completed, the respondents would receive notice from their banks that the checks were fraudulent. The evidence showed UDOGU picked up a minimum of \$137,376.90 in Western Union money transfers from at least 51 separate victims.

This case was investigated by law enforcement officials from the United States Postal Inspection Service, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation and the Cobb County Sheriff's Office.

Assistant United States Attorney William L. McKinnon, Jr. and Special Assistant United States Attorney Rina Tucker Harris prosecuted the case.

For further information please contact David E. Nahmias (pronounced NAH-me-us), United States Attorney, or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is [www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan).