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DEPARTMENT of JUSTICE

United States Attorney's Office
District of Oregon

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Former Fugitive Wanted in Oregon for Real Estate Scam Pleads Guilty

SAN DIEGO—On January 26, 2023, a California man who evaded federal authorities for more than two decades after being convicted at trial and who was wanted in District of Oregon for perpetrating a real estate scam while a fugitive pleaded guilty in San Diego.

Robin James McPherson, a former resident of San Diego, pleaded guilty to failing to appear, willfully attempting to evade income taxes, and wire fraud, resolving three separate pending criminal cases.

According to court documents, in December 2000, McPherson and two co-conspirators were found guilty at trial in the Southern District of California of conspiring to defraud the IRS and tax evasion. Prior to being sentenced in March 2001, McPherson fled the U.S.

In early August 2019, special agents from FBI's office in Eugene, Oregon began investigating McPherson after several individuals reported being the victims of a Costa Rican real estate fraud scheme with ties to the Eugene area. McPherson used a variety of marketing techniques, including cold calls, promotional websites, and Facebook advertisements, to find potential investors for an alleged Costa Rican real estate development opportunity called the Carara Parque Resort Corporation. After victims showed interest in the faux investment opportunity, McPherson would conduct sales calls, from Costa Rica, to explain the project.

McPherson directed victims to wire investment funds to a bank account in Oregon and then had the funds transferred to a bank account he controlled in Costa Rica. Between December 2015 and August 2019, approximately \$1.2 million dollars were transmitted to the Oregon bank account. McPherson used many different excuses to explain to his investors why no resort villas had been constructed. He did not disclose to his investors that their contracts had not been honored and no villas were slated for construction. McPherson used his investors' funds to pay for various personal expenses including his own mortgage.

On October 22, 2020, McPherson was charged by criminal complaint in the District of Oregon with wire fraud and money laundering. In May 2022, he was [apprehended](#) in Costa Rica and returned to San Diego.

Today, McPherson waived indictment and venue and pleaded guilty to wire fraud, a charge pending in the District of Oregon. He also pleaded guilty to failing to appear and willfully attempting to evade income taxes, charges pending in the Southern District of California. On April 28, 2023, McPherson will be sentenced in San Diego on all three charges of conviction.

Wire fraud is punishable by up to 20 years in federal prison. Tax evasion and failure to appear are each punishable by up to five years in federal prison. All three charges also carry maximum fines of up to \$250,000 or twice a defendant's gross gains or losses and three years' supervised release.

This case was investigated by the FBI and IRS-Criminal Investigation. It was prosecuted in the District of Oregon by Assistant U.S. Attorney Gavin W. Bruce.

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