To prevent, deter and detect financial crime

OUR MISSION

To make Singapore the safest and most trusted place for business and finance

OUR SHARED VISION

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As white-collar crimes become increasingly sophisticated and transnational, the CAD’s role in protecting Singapore’s reputation as a world-class financial and commercial centre has become more important than before.

Enforcement and International Cooperation
The CAD’s set-up of the Transnational Commercial Crime Task Force in October 2017 has led to many successful collaborations with foreign law enforcement agencies, such as the Royal Malaysia Police and the Hong Kong Police. Internet love scam cases have decreased by 20.1% from 826 cases in 2017 to 660 cases in 2018. The total loss amount has also decreased by S$9.5 million from S$37 million to S$27.5 million in the same period.

E-commerce scams have increased by 11.4% from 1,907 cases in 2017 to 2,125 cases in 2018. To tackle this, the CAD set up the E-Commerce Fraud Enforcement and Coordination Team (E-FECT) in November 2018. Within two months of its formation, E-FECT has solved at least 230 e-commerce scams.

At the international level, the CAD actively taps on its vast network of financial intelligence units in foreign jurisdictions. This includes the exchange of financial intelligence to detect money laundering, terrorism financing and related criminal activities. The CAD also engages and collaborates with foreign law enforcement agencies, and conducts joint operations against transnational crime syndicates. In 2018, two such operations had led to the arrest of 23 suspects involved in internet love scams and credit card fraud.

Public Education and Community Partnership
The CAD spares no effort in public education and stakeholder engagement at combating white-collar crimes. The continued partnership with the National Crime Prevention Council through anti-scam campaigns and roadshows has increased public awareness on the ever-changing modus operandi of criminals. The CAD has also conducted numerous outreach and sharing sessions on the latest crime trends and preventive measures with the local stakeholders, such as banks and remittance agencies. These initiatives to enhance awareness and vigilance has significantly reinforced the SPF’s crime-fighting efforts.

The CAD has performed well in tackling white-collar crimes through swift and professional enforcement actions. I am confident that the CAD will continue to build on its capabilities and successes to ensure that Singapore remains a safe and trusted place for business and finance.
The Commercial Affairs Department (CAD) plays an important role in safeguarding Singapore’s integrity as a world-class financial and commercial centre through the vigilant and professional enforcement of the law.

Upholding Singapore’s Reputation as a Safe and Trusted Financial Hub

As a major global financial centre, it is imperative that Singapore remains a safe and trusted place for business and finance. We have a zero tolerance policy for any abuse of our financial system, either to commit crime or to launder the proceeds of crime. The Commercial Affairs Department (CAD) plays an important role in safeguarding Singapore’s integrity as a world-class financial and commercial centre through the vigilant and professional enforcement of the law.

However, combatting crime is never a one-man show. In addition to the hard work of our officers and those in the Police Land Divisions, the CAD engages and collaborates with local stakeholders as well as our foreign counterparts to fight financial crime. The CAD also engages the public, arming them with information on the latest scam types to keep themselves and their loved ones safe. To stay one step ahead of increasingly sophisticated criminals, the CAD continues to tap into our foreign intelligence and law enforcement counterparts to acquire insights and best-in-class technology to do our job.

Enforcement Actions

In this digital age, fraudsters are increasingly turning to the Internet as a medium to commit crimes across borders. The Transnational Commercial Crime Task Force (TCTF) was operationalised in October 2017. It was enhanced in April 2018 to investigate a wider category of transnational crimes targeting Singapore victims. The TCTF successfully brought the number of internet love scam cases down by 20.1% in 2018 as compared to 2017 (victim’s losses decreased by about S$9.5 million over the same period). To tackle domestic e-commerce scams, the E-Commerce Fraud Enforcement and Coordination Team (E-FECT) was urgently set up in November 2018 at the CAD with police officers posted from the Land Divisions. E-FECT became fully operational in January 2019, targeting serial e-commerce scammers by freezing their bank accounts as well as identifying, arresting and charging the criminals behind these scams.

The CAD’s enforcement efforts against complex syndicated crime continued in 2018. Notably, we pressed charges against members of a criminal syndicate that allegedly defrauded SkillsFuture Singapore of close to S$40 million worth of grants. Four key syndicate members had fled Singapore before investigation commenced. We seized S$18.5 million of their illicit proceeds and with the assistance of authorities in China, Hong Kong and Malaysia, brought the four suspects back to Singapore to face charges. The CAD collaborated with the insurance industry to investigate and charge two men for engaging in a conspiracy to cheat the Central Provident Fund Board and several major life insurers of over S$129,000 by falsifying the death of one of the men’s mother.

Partnerships with Local Stakeholders

Apart from robust enforcement, the CAD also partners with local stakeholders to prevent, deter and detect crime. The CAD continued our partnership with the National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) to push out information on the newest scam types and prevention measures on a revamped anti-scam website. The new website, scamalert.sg, saw a 29.7% increase of hits in 2018.

In 2018, the CAD engaged the banks and remittance agencies to highlight the latest crime trends as well as preventive measures to adopt. To facilitate timely investigation into payment card frauds, the CAD also collaborated with Mastercard to roll out a Mastercard Forensic Reader (MFR), which enables instant communication with the issuing banks to determine the authenticity of seized cards.

International Cooperation

As commercial crimes become more transnational, the CAD leveraged the strong relationship with our foreign counterparts to conduct joint investigations to target and take down criminals preying on Singapore victims from overseas. In 2018, we worked closely with the Royal Malaysia Police and the Hong Kong Police on internet love scams. Through intelligence sharing and joint operations conducted by officers from the three countries, we were able to dismantle the syndicate believed to be responsible for at least 146 cases that had caused about S$19.45 million in losses. In the same year, the CAD also conducted its very first joint operation with the Polda Metro Jaya of the Indonesian National Police against a transnational credit card fraud syndicate operating in Indonesia. Again, intelligence sharing proved to be crucial in identifying and arresting the syndicate responsible for using stolen credit card details to make a series of fraudulent online purchases of flight tickets from a Singapore website.

To strengthen our warm ties, the CAD also hosted visits by our foreign counterparts. In September 2018, we hosted the Homeland Security Investigations where we acknowledged our close cooperation in the past decade. In October 2018, we hosted a delegation from the Royal Malaysia Police’s Commercial Crime Investigation Department (CCID) at the 11th CAD-CCID Liaison
Meeting where we reaffirmed our commitment towards detecting, deterring and disrupting transnational commercial crimes.

In order to enable the Suspicious Transaction Reporting Office (STRO), the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) of Singapore, to exchange financial intelligence with a larger network of FIUs, we amended the Corruption, Drug Trafficking and Other Serious Crimes (Confiscation of Benefits) Act in early 2019. With these legislative amendments in place, we are now able to exchange financial intelligence with over 150 foreign FIUs who are members of the Egmont Group.

In 2018, the STRO participated in a number of projects organised by the Financial Intelligence Consultative Group under the Counter-Terrorism Financing Summit (CTF). The CTF Summit brings together FIUs in the ASEAN region, Australia and New Zealand to collaborate on terrorism financing and high risk financial crimes issues.

Engaging the Public
To ensure that members of the public are kept updated on the latest crime trends and are equipped with the relevant knowledge and skills on crime prevention, the CAD tapped on our expertise and shared our insights at various public events including the Silver IT FEST Roadshow and the World Investor Week. The CAD also worked with the NCPC to keep the scamalert.sg website current, giving them inputs on the latest crime trends and crime prevention strategies. In addition, the CAD leveraged the opportunities provided by the NCPC for the engagement of commercial stakeholders. We have used these opportunities to educate and spread anti-scam awareness to members of the public.

Enhancing the CAD’s Capabilities
In August 2018, the STRO launched a new one-stop e-services portal, the STRO Online Notices and Reporting Platform (SONAR), which made the collecton, analysis and dissemination of financial intelligence more efficient. It is our first step in the journey towards developing a data analytics system to allow for easier searches and faster sense-making of financial intelligence.

In light of the complexity of white collar crime, the CAD sees a need to tap the expertise of our foreign counterparts to enhance our capabilities. In April 2018, the CAD partnered with the Home Team School of Criminal Investigation and our counterparts from the United States (US) to organise a seminar on Economic Crime & Emerging Crime Trends – the US’ Perspective. In February 2019, the CAD organised the annual International Economic Crime Course. These sessions were attended by officers from various local and foreign enforcement agencies, and covered topics such as emerging crimes and threats around the world, as well as investigative strategies. Participants also had the opportunity to interact and exchange knowledge and expertise on crime fighting.

Uniting as One
Successful and effective crime fighting cannot be achieved alone. The CAD will continue to collaborate with our local stakeholders and foreign counterparts to prevent, deter and detect financial crime. We will concurrently continue the work of public education. The combined efforts of all parties will contribute towards making Singapore the safest and most trusted place for business and finance.

David Chew
Director
Commercial Affairs Department

David Chew
Director
Commercial Affairs Department
MANAGEMENT TEAM

(From Left to Right)
- Mak Kum Kay, Assistant Director, Specialist Development
- Alan Yap, Assistant Director, Specialised Commercial Crime Division
- Pen Chin Wai, Assistant Director, Private Institutional Fraud Division
- Kevin Han, Assistant Director, Financial Investigation Division II
- Lee Wei Kiang, Assistant Director, Financial Investigation Division I
- Jasmine Cher, Assistant Director, Policy & Operations Division
- Jude Hansen Fernandez, Assistant Director, Corporate Services Group
- Tan Fong Chin, Assistant Director, Securities Fraud Division
- Lim Kok Meng, Assistant Director, Investment Fraud Division

NOT IN PICTURE: Lionel Damian Low, Assistant Director, Public Institutional Fraud Division
PARTNERING WITH THE LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS

The Commercial Affairs Department (CAD) actively partners with local stakeholders to fight commercial and financial crimes.

Collaboration with the Private Sector Intermediaries and Government Agencies

Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism Industry Partnership

The Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism Industry Partnership (ACIP), co-chaired by the Monetary Authority of Singapore and the CAD, comprises a pilot group of eight banks and the Association of Banks in Singapore (ABS). The ACIP aims to promote the exchange of views and sharing of ideas and best practices between law enforcement agencies, industry participants and the ABS to mitigate emerging money laundering and terrorism financing risks. On 29 November 2018, the ACIP issued a paper to encourage greater adoption of data analytics solutions by financial institutions. The paper gathered the experiences of major banks in using data analytic techniques to combat financial crimes. It provided practical suggestions to address key governance and implementation considerations to improve the detection of illicit activities. The paper also highlighted areas in Anti-Money Laundering/ Countering the Financing of Terrorism data analytics where closer industry and public-private cooperation could yield significant benefits and bring about transformative change in the approach to combating financial crime.

Outreach on the Suspicious Transaction Reporting Office’s Online Notices and Reporting Platform

On 20 August 2018, the Suspicious Transaction Reporting Office (STRO) of the CAD launched a new one-stop e-services portal, the STRO Online Notices and Reporting Platform (SONAR), which allows the business and financial community to file reports electronically. On 12 November 2018, the STRO conducted a workshop for the reporting entities from financial institutions and designated non-financial businesses and professions to familiarise them with the new filing platform.

Mastercard’s Merchant Security Programme and Mastercard Forensic Reader

On 23 November 2018, the CAD conducted an outreach session during Mastercard’s Merchant Security Programme. The Programme was attended by local merchants (both online and brick-and-mortar) and acquirers such as the major banks in Singapore. During the event, we highlighted the latest trends and challenges relating to payment card fraud and shared crime prevention tips and measures that local merchants can adopt to prevent payment card fraud.

In addition, the CAD formed a partnership with Mastercard to implement the Mastercard Forensic Reader (MFR) which improved the effectiveness, timeliness and accuracy of the CAD’s investigations into payment card frauds. In the past, such investigations required multiple iterative steps involving the investigation agencies, payment solution companies and card issuers. The introduction of the MFR enabled the CAD to contact issuing banks to determine the authenticity of the seized cards within seconds.

Trainings Sessions for Remittance Agencies

The Cad had the opportunity to engage with over 100 accounting professionals during the Institute of Singapore Chartered Accountants (ISCA)’s Financial Forensic Accounting Qualification Information Session. We spoke on topics such as cybercrime, scams, business email compromise, and shared preventive measures and resources useful for the accountants as well as their clients.

Engagement Sessions with United Overseas Bank Limited

Between May and September 2018, the CAD and the Criminal Investigation Department (CID)’s Technology Crime Division were invited to give three talks to employees from United Overseas Bank Limited (UOB). We shared our knowledge on scams and cybercrime, as well as preventive measures and resources which the bank can use to train their employees and protect their customers. Such outreach efforts are part of the SPF’s Collaborative Social Programme in support of the Ministry of Home Affairs’ National Cybersecurity Action Plan.

Institute of Singapore Chartered Accountants Financial Forensic Accounting Qualification Information Session

The ISCA Financial Forensic Accounting Qualification Information Session held on 12 July 2018. Officers from the CAD and the CID at the outreach session with UOB.
Engagement with the General Public

Outreach on Scams and Prevention Efforts

Due to the proliferation of scams in recent years, prevention, apart from heightened enforcement, becomes key to tackle scams. The CAD has collaborated with the National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) to develop crime prevention strategies and raise public awareness and education. One approach was the production and distribution of crime prevention posters and leaflets on scams such as China officials impersonation scams, internet love scams and e-commerce scams. To reach more people, the posters were placed in high traffic public areas such as bus stops, train stations and HDB estates. Crime advisories were also published in the newspapers and advertised on the radio, television and cinemas. The SPF and NCPC also organised anti-scam campaigns and roadshows to increase public awareness of the different types of scams.

Other Public Education Efforts

As part of a holistic approach to crime prevention, the CAD worked to raise the public's awareness of emerging crimes of concern. The CAD also aim to equip members of the public with useful information so that they can protect themselves from becoming a victim.

The CAD had the privilege of sharing its expertise at the following events:

- Silver IT Fest Roadshow held from 17 to 19 August 2018 at Toa Payoh HDB Hub, where we reached out to members of the public to share on scams. The total turnout for the three-day event exceeded 34,000 people.
- World Investor Week held from 4 to 12 October 2018 at the National Library, where we were part of a panel to share insights on red flags in investment scams. The candid and interactive session was attended by more than 100 members of the public.
- Training sessions for frontline staff at Challenger outlets in October 2018, where we shared on how they might identify scams, in particular those involving the sale of iTunes cards.

Strengthening Partnerships

Visits by our Foreign Counterparts

The CAD is committed to building and strengthening our relationships with foreign partners to tackle the increasingly complex transnational crimes. In 2018, the CAD hosted several foreign counterparts during their visits to Singapore.

On 18 September 2018, the CAD hosted a visit by the Homeland Security Investigations (HSI). The excellent cooperation with the HSI has been ongoing in the past decade. Notable examples include information from the HSI which resulted in the seizure of more than S$5 million in a single case, and a separate case which led to the successful extradition of two Singaporeans to the United States (US). The HSI assisted the CAD in the repatriation of a Singaporean fugitive from the US to Singapore. The HSI also actively participated in the discussion of emerging economic crime trends with our SPF investigation fraternity and other domestic law enforcement agencies.

In October 2018, the CAD hosted a delegation from the Royal Malaysia Police’s Commercial Crime Investigation Department (CCID) at the 11th CAD-CCID Liaison Meeting. The CAD-CCID Liaison Meeting is an annual bilateral meeting for both departments to share the current crime situation and trends, as well as best practices employed. At the end of the meeting, the CAD and CCID reaffirmed the commitment towards the common goal of disrupting transnational commercial crimes.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Commercial crime is becoming more complex, larger in magnitude and increasingly transnational. To counter these challenges, the Commercial Affairs Department (CAD) continues to strengthen its partnerships with foreign counterparts. The CAD also works with foreign counterparts to enhance one another’s capabilities and to mount joint investigations.
Sharing of Financial Intelligence

To combat transnational crimes, the Suspicious Transaction Reporting Office (STRO) of the CAD actively enters into information sharing arrangements with foreign Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs). In 2018, the STRO signed four Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) with the FIUs of Poland, Brunei, Philippines and Laos. The arrangements would facilitate the timely exchange of financial intelligence between the STRO and foreign FIUs to combat money laundering, associated predicate offences and terrorist financing.

In recent years, the STRO has enhanced its cooperation with regional FIUs from the ASEAN countries, Australia and New Zealand by participating in the various initiatives under the Counter-Terrorism Financing (CTF) Summit. The CTF Summit is an annual event that seeks to develop regional solutions to terrorism financing and high risk financial crimes issues through financial intelligence sharing.

Building Capabilities Together

The CAD is committed to building capabilities in handling complex transnational crimes. In the past year, several workshops were conducted for the local and foreign agencies.

In April 2018, the CAD, in partnership with the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the HSI and the Home Team School of Criminal Investigation, organised a three-day seminar on Economic Crime & Emerging Crime Trends – the US Perspective. This seminar was attended by officers from the CAD, the Police Land Divisions, the Central Narcotics Bureau, the Singapore Customs, the Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore, the Attorney-General’s Chambers, the Ministry of Law and the Monetary Authority of Singapore. The objective of this seminar was to equip participants with knowledge of economic crimes, emerging crimes, money laundering trends and threats around the world. The popular topic of cryptocurrencies was also covered during the seminar. The sharing touched on the crime trend, investigative strategies and legal considerations in prosecution of cases involving cryptocurrencies.

In February 2019, the CAD organised the annual International Economic Crime Course (IECC). The IECC was attended by 30 participants from the local agencies, including the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau, the Ministry of Law, the Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority, the Singapore Exchange Limited and the Police Land Divisions, as well as the foreign law enforcement agencies from India, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Australia. During the course, participants learned from experts and industry professionals on Transnational Financial Crime, Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism regime, Financial Investigation, Asset Confiscation and Electronic & Cyber Fraud. Participants also went on study visits to the VISA Innovation Lab, Technology Crime Division’s Forensic Lab as well as the SPF Heritage Centre. The classroom lectures and outdoor learning journeys provided the course participants ample opportunities to mingle and network, facilitating cross-border understanding and communications.

Case Successes arising from Joint Operations and Collaboration with Foreign Counterparts

Cooperation and collaboration with foreign counterparts have always been a key component of the CAD’s efforts in combatting transnational crimes. Syndicates targeting residents in Singapore were mostly found operating overseas. They cheat victims in Singapore through scams such as internet love scams and e-commerce scams. We collaborated with our foreign counterparts and conducted cross-border operations to apprehend criminals who abused territorial boundaries and the anonymity of the Internet to commit crimes.

In 2018, the CAD worked with the Royal Malaysia Police and the Hong Kong Police after detecting that internet love scam victims from these three countries fell prey to perpetrators believed to be operating from Malaysia. The suspects were identified through intelligence sharing and the three police forces conducted joint operations in October 2018. A total of 19 suspects were arrested in Malaysia and telecommunication devices as well as ATM cards were seized for investigation. The syndicate is believed to be responsible for at least 146 cases of internet love scam cases in the three countries, involving losses of about S$19.45 million in total.

In the same year, the CAD conducted our first joint operation with the Polda Metro Jaya (PMJ) of the Indonesian National Police, against a transnational credit card fraud syndicate operating in Indonesia. Intelligence was shared between the CAD and the PMJ to facilitate cross-border investigation to identify the syndicate involved in the scam. The syndicate had used stolen credit card details to make a serious of fraudulent online purchases of flight tickets from a Singapore website. The joint operation led to the arrest of four subjects in Indonesia. They were suspected to be responsible for at least 40 counts of fraudulent online purchases amounting to about S$100,000.

In September 2018, Singapore received a request from the US for the extradition of a 42-year-old Indian national, Hitesh Madhubhai Patel (Patel), who is alleged to be part of an Indian-based transnational criminal organisation. Patel is alleged to have carried out a vast, sophisticated, and highly successful India-based telephone impersonation fraud and money laundering scheme from January 2012 to October 2016. Through this scheme, over 15,000 victims in the US were defrauded of at least US$230 million. In consultation with the Attorney-General’s Chambers and pursuant to a Warrant of Pre-Apprehension issued by the State Courts of Singapore, officers from the CAD arrested Patel on 21 September 2018. The State Courts held that Patel was liable to be extradited to the US to stand trial for general conspiracy, wire fraud conspiracy, and money laundering conspiracy. Patel was subsequently extradited to the US on 18 April 2019.
THE POLICE LAND DIVISIONS

The Commercial Affairs Department (CAD) works closely with the Commercial Crime Squads (CCS) of the Police Land Divisions in the fight against commercial crime. We focus on three areas: (a) Engagement (b) Training, and (c) Recognition.

Engagement by Director CAD

Director CAD shares strategies to combat commercial crime with the CCS ground officers.

This is an annual platform for the CAD and the CCS to discuss the unique challenges that each unit faced over the year and to develop solutions together. These visits also reaffirm the CAD's commitment to work with the CCS to navigate the challenging commercial crime landscape.

Training on Basic Financial Investigation

Between October 2017 and May 2018, all CCS officers attended the training on basic financial investigation.

The training was provided by a team of officers from the CAD, the Criminal Investigation Department and the Home Team School of Criminal Investigation that developed the SPF Financial Investigation Competence Framework. The team trained about 1,000 officers from the SPF, including those from the CCS, in basic financial investigations. This lays the foundation for officers to actively deprive criminals of proceeds of crime, and combat money laundering.

Recognition through Director CAD Award

On 1 March 2019, Director CAD awards were presented to nine teams and five officers from the CCS units for their outstanding work in fighting commercial crime. These awards recognise the contribution from the CCS in policing the commercial crime landscape.

Best Performing Land Division in the Commercial Crime Squad Audit is presented to Clementi Division CCS.

The award ceremony is based on an annual audit carried out by the CAD to identify strengths and weaknesses of commercial crime investigations at the division level. The event also surfaces both the best practices and the necessary remedial actions, for sharing purposes.

This friendly competition serves to motivate the divisional CCS, and at the same time, foster a spirit toward continual improvement across the units.

Clementi Division is presented with the award - for exemplary operational efficiency in solving a case of Cheating involving S$1.5 million worth of cars, leading to the arrest of four offenders for offences of Cheating with Common Intention during the period 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2018.

The team was commended for their work in the complaint where Lion City Rentals Pte Ltd was cheated into delivering 25 cars to a group of individuals without receiving the promised payments. The team successfully recovered the 25 vehicles within 24 hours before the criminals could dispose of them. Four individuals have been prosecuted in Court. At the time of publication, the court proceedings are ongoing.
INTELLIGENCE AND ADMINISTRATION GROUP

FRONT ROW (Seated): Mak Kum Kay, Assistant Director, Specialist Development, Seow Hwee Koon, Deputy Director, Intelligence and Administration Group, Jude Hansen Fernandez, Assistant Director, Corporate Services Group

BACK ROW (Standing): Lim Boon Jui, Head, Suspicious Transaction Reporting Office Branch III, Rovin Ng, Head, Intelligence Division, Christabelle Lim, Head, Corporate Support Division, Yolanda Chin, Head, Suspicious Transaction Reporting Office Branch I, Rynette Chia, Head, Manpower & Training Division, Tay Pei Fong, Head, Planning & Organisation Development Division, Andrew Pek, Head, Field Research Branch

REPORT BY INTELLIGENCE AND ADMINISTRATION GROUP

The Intelligence Division provides comprehensive, timely and accurate field intelligence support to the enforcement arms of the Commercial Affairs Department (CAD). The division builds strong networks with local and overseas intelligence and law enforcement agencies to exchange and gather information to tackle transnational commercial crimes.

The Suspicious Transaction Reporting Office (STRO) is the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) of Singapore and is the central agency for receiving, analysing and disseminating Suspicious Transaction Reports (STRs), Cash Movement Reports (CMRs) and Cash Transaction Reports (CTRs). The STRO turns the data in these reports into financial intelligence to detect money laundering, terrorism financing and other criminal offences.

About the Intelligence Division

The Intelligence Division, comprising the Field Intelligence Section and the Intelligence Analysis and Processing Section, gathers intelligence and plays an integral role in the CAD’s enforcement efforts to prevent, deter and detect financial crime.

In 2018, we continued to conduct ground intelligence operations to support the CAD’s investigations. In cases where victims transacted with an unknown culprit, we are able to assist in ascertaining these identities through enrichment of information ferreted from open sources, gathering and verification of information through field intelligence and sense-making through intelligence analysis. In one case, we established the identity of a Malaysian who had collected criminal proceeds of S$370,000 for a China officials impersonation scam syndicate. We also ascertained the identity of the unlicensed remittance agent who received the monies from the culprit and assisted to remit the funds to others.

In a separate case, the Syndicated Fraud Branch of the CAD arrested two male Malaysians for dishonestly receiving stolen property and found them in possession of S$590,000 of criminal proceeds. In pursuing the money trail, we uncovered the involvement of an unlicensed remittance business. We provided intelligence on the latter’s places of operations. The information led investigators to the recovery of criminal proceeds cheated from two victims of a China officials impersonation scam.

About the Suspicious Transaction Reporting Office (STRO)

The STRO receives, analyses and disseminates financial intelligence. We engage and collaborate with the reporting entities, as well as domestic law enforcement and regulatory agencies to carry out our responsibilities. We also cooperate with foreign financial intelligence units (FIU) through the exchange of information and participation in projects.

Information Technology Systems Modernisation Journey

On 20 August 2018, the STRO launched a new one-stop e-services portal, the STRO Online Notices and Reporting Platform (SONAR). This is part of the STRO’s ongoing initiative to modernise our information technology systems. SONAR allows the business and financial community to file STRs, CMRs and CTRs electronically to the STRO. New electronic forms for STRs, CMRs and CTRs are designed to collect structured data to make it easier for the STRO to do searches and apply data analytics tools.

We have increased the capture of structured data to broaden the use of computer software to analyse the reports. We have also placed greater emphasis on the quality of financial data over the quantity of reports filed. To familiarise the filers with the new filing requirements, the STRO has issued form guides through our publications and conducted various outreach sessions. In 2018, there was an 8% decrease in the number of STRs filed as compared to 2017. The CMR filings increased by 7% and CTR filings increased by 1% in 2018.
The STRO’s long-term plan is to develop a next generation information technology system to make the receipt, analysis and dissemination of financial intelligence more efficient and effective. We have embarked on a project in the year to build better data analytical capabilities. In the upcoming year, we plan to add new capabilities such as system-to-system interface with selected domestic agencies. This will allow us to shorten the time to serve out relevant financial intelligence and to disseminate it to our domestic agencies.

Process Improvements

In the year, the STRO has also re-organised our work processes to expedite the analysis and dissemination of financial intelligence. We saw a 111% increase in the number of STROs disseminated to relevant domestic enforcement agencies in 2018 as compared to 2017.

International Cooperation

The STRO is committed to international cooperation. In 2018, we received 273 requests for assistance (RFAs) from foreign FIUs and sent out 280 RFAs to foreign FIUs. We concluded four Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with our counterpart FIUs in the year. With this, the STRO has concluded a total of 50 MOUs/Letters of Undertaking (LOUs) with our foreign counterparts as of 31 December 2018. Such agreements are important as they allow the STRO to share financial intelligence with our foreign counterparts.

Tackling a step further, legislative amendments were introduced to the Corruption, Drug Trafficking and Other Serious Crimes (Confiscation of Benefits) Act to allow the STRO to exchange financial intelligence with FIUs under the Egmont Charter and Principles for Information Exchange. With the amendments effective from 1 April 2019, the STRO is now able to exchange information with more than 150 foreign FIUs under the Egmont Group, thereby tripling the size of our network. Consequently, we anticipate an increase in the number of incoming and outgoing RFAs from and to foreign FIUs. With this expansion in the network for information exchange, we will be in a better position to identify and target overseas crime syndicates.

In addition to our participation in the Egmont Group of FIUs, the STRO has participated in a number of projects organised by the Financial Intelligence Consultative Group under the Counter-Terrorism Financing (CTF) Summit. The CTF Summit brings together FIUs in the ASEAN region, Australia and New Zealand to collaborate on Anti-Money Laundering/Countering the Financing of Terrorism matters.

In 2018 and 2019, analysts from the STRO have attended the first and second run of the Regional Financial Intelligence Analyst Course (FIAC) conducted by Australia and hosted in Brunei Darussalam and the Philippines. The STRO will be hosting the third run of the Regional FIAC in Singapore in the second half of 2019. The STRO will continue to improve its capabilities and apply technology more pervasively in the receipt, analysis and dissemination of financial intelligence. We will also strengthen collaboration with the various stakeholders to fight money laundering, terrorism financing and other criminal offences on the local and international level.

Seow Hwee Koon
Deputy Director
Intelligence and Administration Group

The STRO disseminates the information from the STR and the results of its analysis to an investigating unit of the supporting white collar crime investigations.

Case involving cheating, falsification of accounts, criminal breach of trust and money laundering

On 17 May 2013, the STRO received a STR on Person Y, who was a former accountant of Company S. There was a series of suspicious transactions in Person Y’s bank accounts in Singapore. Numerous cheques issued by Company S were deposited into Person Y’s bank accounts. The total quantum of these deposits significantly exceeded Person Y’s monthly salary received from Company S.

In February 2019, Person Y was sentenced to three years and 11 months imprisonment for offences including cheating, falsification of accounts, criminal breach of trust and money laundering.

Case involving evasion of income taxes and Goods and Services Tax (GST)

The STRO received multiple CTRs and STRs on Person N. He is a former professional electrical engineer and owned a sole proprietorship, Business C. Using the financial intelligence obtained from the STRO and other information available to IRAS, IRAS detected anomalies in Person N’s income tax declaration and commenced a domestic tax investigation.

In June 2018, Person N was sentenced to six weeks’ imprisonment and ordered to pay total taxes, penalties and fines totalling S$713,609.62.

The above cases highlight the crucial role that the reporting entities play in the detection of money laundering and related criminal activity. Due to the vigilance of the reporting entities in detecting suspicious transactions in the accounts of customers, the STRO was able to disseminate the financial intelligence and the results of its analyses to the relevant domestic agencies for appropriate action to be taken.
STATISTICS ON FINANCIAL INTELLIGENCE

NUMBER OF SUSPICIOUS TRANSACTION REPORTS (STRS) RECEIVED

In 2018, the STRO received 32,660 STRs, which is an 8% decrease from 2017. The drop spreads across almost all sectors. Although the number of STRs has dropped in 2018, we saw an improvement in the outcome of STR analysis (see section on Outcome of STR Analysis).

BREAKDOWN OF STRs SUBMITTED BY SECTOR

The banking sector remains the main source of STRs received by the STRO in 2018. A breakdown of the STRs submitted by the various sectors is shown in the chart below:

OUTCOME OF STR ANALYSIS

Financial Intelligence Reports Disseminated in 2018 by Agency

In 2018, the STRO disseminated 111% more financial intelligence reports to domestic enforcement agencies as compared to 2017. The increase is attributable to our workflow reorganisation which improved the efficiency in analysing and disseminating financial intelligence. The SPF units, including the CAD, collectively received the majority of the financial intelligence reports disseminated by the STRO.

Impact of Financial Intelligence Reports Disseminated

Financial intelligence is crucial to investigations as it provides leads to commence investigations or support ongoing investigations. Preliminary financial intelligence can also be used to develop further intelligence, identify emerging crime trends or detect possible crimes.

In 2018, the disseminated financial intelligence reports were predominantly used to develop further intelligence.
The STRO receives cross border CMRs from travellers (NP727 reports), as well as senders, carriers and recipients (NP728 reports). The number of CMRs received by the STRO increased by about 7% from 73,875 in 2017 to 78,822 in 2018. The increase was due to a higher number of NP727 reports submitted to the STRO.

The STRO receives CTRs from casino operators and Precious Stones and Metals Dealers (PSMDs). The number of CTRs submitted in the year increased by 1% from 380,553 in 2017 to 383,769 in 2018. This is due to a rise in the number of CTRs filed by the casinos.

CTR Information is disseminated to domestic agencies and foreign FIUs.

In conjunction with the launch of SONAR, the STRO provided regular guidance to the reporting entities by issuing circulars and form guides. On 12 November 2018, the STRO conducted a workshop titled “STRO Workshop for STR Filers – How to complete the STR Form” to 261 reporting entities from financial institutions and designated non-financial businesses and professions. This workshop aims to familiarise the reporting entities on completing the STR form so that the data provided is accurate and in standardised data points and format required by the STRO. The STRO will continue to engage the reporting entities to discuss areas for improvement in STR filing, including revising and improving the STR form.

This proactive engagement with the local stakeholders has allowed the STRO to receive higher quality STRs disclosing various possible criminal activities across the different sectors.

The STRO held meetings and discussion sessions with domestic agencies, including law enforcement agencies and regulatory units in 2018. These meetings and discussions sought to raise awareness of the value of financial intelligence in criminal investigations, exchange trends and crime typologies as well as set dissemination policies and criteria.

In 2018, albeit the overall 3% decrease (2,203 in 2018 and 2,263 in 2017) in requests for suspicious financial transactions or antecedent reports in 2018 as compared to 2017, we saw an increase in the number of such requests from non-SPF agencies (745 in 2018 and 656 in 2017). This shows an increase in the awareness and the use of financial intelligence by these agencies.

The STRO renders assistance to our foreign counterparts in response to their requests for assistance (RFAs). The STRO also sends RFAs to our foreign counterparts to further our analysis of financial intelligence and provide investigation leads to domestic agencies. The number of RFAs received from foreign FIUs increased by 21% to 273 in 2018 from 225 in 2017. This demonstrates the foreign FIUs’ increased interest in the financial intelligence provided by the STRO. The number of RFAs sent to foreign FIUs remain relatively stable between 293 in 2017 and 280 in 2018.

 Requests for suspicious financial transactions or antecedent reports in 2018

Requests for suspicious financial transactions or antecedent reports in 2018

- **Non-SPF Agencies**: 34%
- **Other SPF Divisions**: 59%
- **CAD**: 7%
REPORT BY ENFORCEMENT GROUP

The Enforcement Group comprises four divisions: Securities Fraud Division, Investment Fraud Division, Private Institutional Fraud Division and Public Institutional Fraud Division. The Group investigates four main clusters of commercial crime. These are namely capital market fraud, complex fraudulent investment and pyramid selling schemes, fraud involving private companies, businesses, lawyers and accountants, and fraud involving government agencies and the public sector.

The Year in Review

2018 was an intense year for the Enforcement Group, so was the first few months of 2019.

Our investigation into the alleged fraud that led to SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG) disbursing close to S$40 million of subsidies continued apace. To date, 16 persons have been charged in Court with offences ranging from cheating to money laundering to perversion of justice. Three of them have pleaded guilty to their charges.

We took swift action to commence investigation into a number of listed companies – Kimly Limited, Yuuzoo Networks Group Corp and No Signboard Holdings Ltd - when allegations of wrongdoing surfaced. And while 2019 Chinese New Year celebrations were still ongoing, we found ourselves immersed in an investigation into the affairs of the two local Wirecard subsidiaries.

In the midst of all this frenetic activity, we also saw results from our earlier work.

In a welcome twist to the long running saga involving the October 2013 penny stock crash, one of the three accused persons, Goh Hin Calm, decided to throw in the towel and plead guilty. He was convicted and sentenced to 36 months’ imprisonment for his role in abetting the largest market manipulation to date, one which wiped out S$8 billion from the stock market in days. The high court trial against the other two accused persons has commenced and is ongoing. In addition, 16 persons were convicted between January 2018 and April 2019 on charges arising from investigations into Securities and Futures Act offences.

In another first, Richard Tiang Teng Hoong, accounts clerk of Double Ace Trading Company (Private) Limited (Double Ace), was sentenced to 18 years’ imprisonment for embezzling more than S$46 million from companies who had used Double Ace to manage their operations and financial affairs. This is the largest amount misappropriated by an individual to date.

Gold investment schemes flourished for a few years in the late 2000s into the early 2010s. Members of the public poured millions of dollars into such investments, believing them to be both safe and lucrative. Such schemes typically sold gold bars at above market prices, with a guarantee of monthly returns as well as a buyback by the seller. Most of such schemes, if not all, were unable to sustain their business and died a quick death. In particular, some schemes were investigated by us on suspicions of fraud. In the early months of 2019, five persons in connection with two gold investment companies, The Gold Label Pte Ltd and Genneva Pte Ltd, were charged with fraudulent trading under the Companies Act. Notably, some of these accused persons were arrested with the aid of the Royal Malaysia Police, a testament to the strong ties forged with our Malaysian counterparts.

We are also seeing investment opportunities offered to members of the public by way of multi-level marketing schemes. These schemes often focus heavily on promoting recruitment-driven behaviour without any real profit-generating activities. Participants receive most of their benefits based on the number of recruits they bring in. The danger of such schemes is that they tend to collapse when the pool of recruits runs dry. During the year, 10 persons were charged for offences under the Multi-Level Marketing and Pyramid Selling (Prohibition) Act.
Investments that are both safe and lucrative are rarities. There are a multitude of investment schemes out there which have offered sky high returns, and failed. Many of these schemes are fraudulent as monies collected were either not invested or only partially invested in the supposed investment. The case against Muhammad Farhan Bin Zamali, which is featured in greater detail in the next section, is a case in point.

While many fraudsters seek to ride on Singapore’s reputation as a safe financial hub to entice the unwary to put money with them, there are also those who operate outside our borders and reach out to Singapore residents easily through the Internet and social media. In the past year, we have received many complaints about loss of investments made through online trading platforms. Towards the end of 2016, we saw the emergence of online articles with false information to perpetuate investment scams in trendy financial products like cryptocurrencies. These online articles were craftily designed to target Singapore residents, and featured well-known personalities in Singapore purportedly endorsing these investments.

Investing with or through overseas entities increases the risk. In the event that the investment goes sour, it is far more difficult for investors to pursue claims. To combat these new threats, we issued crime advisories as needed, and close collaboration with our strategic partners are important pillars in our efforts to prevent and deter crimes. We issue crime advisories as needed, and these can be found on the SPF website, sharing with the public on ways to avoid falling prey to investment scams. We also regularly meet with various government agencies administering grants to identify and mitigate common risk areas. We believe that a multi-pronged approach and the collective effort of all stakeholders will yield dividends in the long run.

Going Forward

Technological advancement remains at the forefront of Singapore’s progress and development. Government subsidies meant to support businesses and defray rising health costs inadvertently open up areas for opportunistic fraudsters to exploit. The world without borders” has ramped up the ease with which fraudsters reach out from every conceivable part of the world to our people. All these mean that the challenges to effective enforcement will continue to grow. The Enforcement Group will take these challenges in our stride. We will continue to maintain a tough stance against criminals who think of making a quick buck out of unsuspecting victims or padding their own coffers with public funds. At the same time, we will continue our efforts to improve our capabilities, educate the public and work with strategic partners, both here and abroad.

Rachel Koo
Deputy Director
Enforcement Group

CASE HIGHLIGHTS OF ENFORCEMENT GROUP

PP V WONG KWAN SING AND OTHERS

Between 2009 and 2013, Singapore saw a wave of rip-offs for companies offering investments in the form of buyback schemes. One of these companies was The Gold Label Pte Ltd (TGL). TGL sold physical gold bars to clients at more than 20% mark-up above prevailing gold spot price. Investors were promised returns as high as 24% per annum and were given an option to sell back the gold bars to TGL at the original purchase price when their contracts expire.

In its heyday, TGL attracted more than 2,000 investors and racked up close to S$151 million in the sale of buyback schemes. But the company was eventually wound up by its creditors after it failed to pay investors as promised.

TGL was run by three directors, Wong Kwan Sing, Iseil Rudoff James Mainland and How Soo Feng. All three have been charged in court with one count of fraudulent trading under Section 340(5) of the Companies Act. The prosecution is alleging that these directors sold TGL’s buyback schemes when the company did not operate any substantive business and had no sustainable means to honour its payment and buyback obligation.

At the time of publication, the court proceedings against the trio are ongoing.

PP V JASON SIM CHON ANG AND OTHERS

Established in 1987 as a timber flooring service provider, Jason Holdings Limited came a long way to cement itself as one of the leading timber flooring companies in Singapore. The company was listed on the Singapore Exchange in September 2012 and even attained a market capitalisation of approximately S$140 million at one point in time.

However, Jason Holdings Limited’s glory days came to a halt on 14 January 2016, when the company announced a trading suspension, after an internal audit revealed several issues ranging from failure by Jason Parquet Specialist (Singapore) Pte Ltd (JPS), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Jason Holdings Limited, to make salary payments on time, erroneous submission of supporting documents for short-term trade facilities to lapse in internal controls in respect of recording of transactions leading to omissions in the recognition of costs of goods sold from Jason Holdings Limited’s half-year financial statements for 2015.

The ensuing special audit carried out by Ernst & Young Singapore uncovered more issues, including the irregularity that JPS’ post-shipment import financing facilities were used to pay its suppliers deposits or advance payments. Post-shipment import financing is a type of bank financing to pay suppliers for goods that have already been sold and delivered.

The Commercial Affairs Department (CAD) launched an investigation into Jason Holdings Limited and its founder and CEO, Jason Sim Chon Ang (Jason Sim) shortly after the special audit findings were disclosed.

Aρrousing from the investigations, Jason Sim was charged with 16 counts of cheating under the Penal Code and two counts of offences under Section 76 of the Companies Act for authorising the giving of financial assistance to acquire shares in Jason Holdings Limited. The cheating charges allege that Jason Sim had worked with four timber suppliers to submit false invoices and delivery orders to six banks, each made up by its members alone or in its capacity as a director or an employee of the Company, or otherwise in connection with the Company, or both.

The remaining director or members of the Company, or any person who was a director or an employee of the Company, or otherwise in connection with the Company, or both.

If convicted, the trio face a jail term of up to seven years and a fine.

Trio arrested over multimillion-dollar gold investment scam

Going Forward

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JASON SIM CHARGED WITH CHEATING

JASON H Oldings’ founder and ex-CEO Jason Sim charged with cheating

He is accused of cheating several banks of over $55 million between 2011 and 2015

By Angela Tan

Singapore — Former executive director of Jason Holdings, Yee Koon Wah, has been charged under the Capital Markets Act for his role in the company’s alleged cheating of banks of over $55 million.

He faces 13 charges, such as causing false accounting, cheating, falsifying documents, concealing information and withdrawing money from the company without the discretion of the board.

In early 2006, Sanmenxia obtained two loans amounting to $15 million from the People’s Republic of China. As of 1 August 2006, New Lakeside (SGX) was listed on SESDAQ of the Singapore Exchange on 24 October 2007.

In August 2006, the company obtained a $15 million loan from Bank of China (BOC) to finance its operations, which the company needed to repay by 15 August 2007.

But the company did not have the funds to repay the loan, and the company director sli- ping as the company suffered losses from its operations and was facing the issue of going concern. The additional RMB 22.75 million obligation would have worsened New Lakeside’s financial difficulties significantly.

Under SGX Listing Rule 703, a listed company is required to immediately disclose information that is material in nature.

The call on the corporate guarantee by BOC constituted information that is required to be disclosed immediately. However, no announcements were made by New Lakeside. BOC eventually filed a lawsuit against Sanmenxia and Xu Zhou to recover the amount outstanding. On 1 February 2007, the Chinese Court found the suit in BOC’s favour. Xu Zhou made the repayments in branches between September 2007 and March 2008.

But New Lakeside, under the three-year programme to grow the group and list with Jason Parquet employees being present at the meetings, had already adopted and implemented the three-year programme to grow the group and list with Jason Parquet employees being present at the meetings.

The banks were said to have been deceived into providing loans to $55 million to New Lakeside, working with a false statement of accounts of J 000,000, which were not delivered.

These included deposits and pre- sales from customers, for example. These receivables had been stated as account receivable financing from different accounts.

Reviewing the records conducted by the Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Act, Jason Holdings’ internal audit and external audit, the company had also done internal assessment and review of the company’s financial statements.

In January 2008, BOC had obtained a lien over the assets of New Lakeside. On 28 February 2008, BOC was informed that New Lakeside had defaulted on the loan.

The company’s actions were under the auditors’ suspicion of fraudulent practices.

But BOC had not obtained a lien over the assets of New Lakeside. On 28 February 2008, BOC was informed that New Lakeside had defaulted on the loan.

It is the prosecution’s contention that Triumph Global (Asia) Limited and Union Markets Limited did not carry out any leveraged foreign exchange trading activities and that the SinglIForex scheme was a facade to defraud investors.

Three former independent directors of New Lakeside were also each charged with one count of Section 331(1) read with Section 302(2) of the Securities and Futures Act.

At the time of publication, the court proceedings against the three directors are ongoing.

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Investing in SinglIForex had additional benefits that distinguished it from most other leveraged foreign exchange investment schemes. Investors could receive commissions based on the trading activities of the firms they directly recruited, as well as that of new investors they directly recruited. In connection with this, Leong Koon Wah and Ng Kuan Chuan, and four other persons were charged for promoting a pyramid selling scenario under the Multi-Level Marketing and Pyramid Selling (Prohibition) Act. These four other persons have been convicted. Three of them were sentenced to fines ranging from S$100,000 to S$150,000. The sentence against the fourth person is pending.

At the time of publication, the court proceedings against Leong Koon Wah and Ng Kuan Chuan are ongoing.

PP V MOHAMAD HISHAM BIN MOHD IDRIS

PP V NURNAVINDIANTI BINTI IMAM MAJUK

Typed as a “loyalty referral programme”, the Galaxy Trio scheme, which purportedly originated from Canada, promised members that the scheme was their key to financial freedom.

To join this loyalty referral programme, members had to first pay an upfront fee of either S$400 or S$2,000, depending on the package chosen. As a member, one could gain access to a range of e-books and audio tracks purportedly produced by Galaxy Trio. What was especially attractive about the programme were the promised bonuses when they recruited additional members, and, when their recruits brought in more new members. The bonuses were promised to the members in the form of online credits, which could be converted into cash. Members were also promised free vacation trips to exciting places such as Gold Coast, Australia, if they could recruit a certain number of members. Unfortunately, the group collapsed as soon as the supply of new members ran out some two years later.

In relation to the Galaxy Trio loyalty referral programme, Mohamad Hisham bin Mohd Idris (Mohamed Hisham) and Nurmayanti Jant in Imam Majuk (Nurmayanti) have been charged under the Multi-Level Marketing and Pyramid Selling (Prohibition) Act for promoting a pyramid selling scheme, applying for the registration of a business that was designed to promote a pyramid selling scheme, and, obtaining incorporation of a company that was designed to promote a pyramid selling scheme. It is the prosecution’s contention that the Galaxy Trio loyalty referral programme was simply a recruitment scheme that provided benefits to its members for recruiting others into the program, or, in other words, a pyramid selling scheme. The prosecution is further alleging that Mohamad Hisham and Nurmayanti
had actively marketed this pyramid selling scheme through various means including the use of corporate entities.

At the time of publication, the court proceedings are ongoing.

**PP V MUHAMMAD FARHAN BIN ZAMALI**

Investing with persons, not licensed by the Monetary Authority of Singapore, is risky and the chances of losing your hard earned money are increased significantly. This was a painful lesson for many of the persons who invested with Muhammad Farhan Bin Zamali (Muhammad Farhan).

Between 2014 and 2016, Muhammad Farhan approached several investors and offered to invest their monies by trading in foreign exchange on a leveraged basis. However, he did not have a capital markets services licence from the Monetary Authority of Singapore to do so. Even if he had applied for such a licence, he would not have qualified as he lacked the relevant qualifications and experience. He had cut his teeth in the fast-paced world of leveraged foreign exchange trading by trading on his own after attending courses.

Muhammad Farhan’s scheme promised investors returns ranging between 20% and 40% for an investment period between one and seven months. Such unrealistically high returns should have made potential investors wary. Unfortunately, many people chose to believe in Muhammad Farhan and his investment scheme.

Initially, Muhammad Farhan did trade in leveraged foreign exchange for his investors. However, his trades started to rack up losses. Eventually, he stopped trading. But, he exchanged for his investors. However, his trades started

Eventually, Muhammad Farhan was charged with 11 counts of cheating involving five victims and a sum of S$65,000 that was collected between October 2015 and March 2016. He was also charged with two counts of criminal breach of trust for misappropriating S$516,678, as well as another two counts of forgery-related offences. Muhammad Farhan also faced a charge of carrying on a business in a regulated activity, as well as another charge of holding out to be carrying on such a business, without a valid capital markets services licence under the Securities and Futures Act. On 30 October 2016, Muhammad Farhan pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 16 months’ imprisonment.

**PP V TIANG TENG HOONG RICHARD**

On 1 November 2017, Richard Tiang Teng Hoong (Richard Tiang) was charged with 89 counts of offences under the Penal Code and the Corruption, Drug Trafficking and Other Serious Crimes (Confiscation of Benefits) Act.

For many years, Double Ace Trading Company (Private) Limited (Double Ace) was appointed to manage the operations and financial affairs of four offshore companies. Richard Tiang, who was an accounts clerk with Double Ace, was assigned to handle the bookkeeping and payment functions for these offshore companies.

Richard Tiang abused his position. Between January 2007 and March 2014, Richard Tiang misappropriated the equivalent of S$46.2 million from the offshore companies’ bank accounts. He did this by getting the authorised signatories to sign on cheques or telegraphic transfer forms where the payee’s details had not been filled in yet. The bank authorised signatories were told that the pre-signed documents would be used for the business of the offshore companies. Subsequently, Richard Tiang put himself as the payee on the pre-signed cheques and telegraphic transfer forms and caused the companies’ funds to be transferred into his personal bank account.

Richard Tiang was a heavy gambler and he primarily used the monies he misappropriated to fund his gambling activities, which ranged from bets with the Singapore Pools to gambling at the casino.

To cover up his misappropriation, Richard Tiang falsely recorded payments out of the offshore companies as freight charges in the companies’ books.

On 7 February 2019, Richard Tiang pleaded guilty to 10 counts of offences under Criminal Breach of Trust as a servant and five counts of offences for using his benefits derived from criminal conduct. The remaining 54 charges were taken into consideration for the purposes of sentencing. He was sentenced to 18 years’ imprisonment.

**PP V GINNY CHAN SIOK HWEE**

A glance at Ginny Chan Siok Hwee’s (Ginny) records and the term ‘serial criminal’ comes to mind.

In 1988 and then again in 1997, Ginny was convicted and imprisoned for cheating offences. In 2004, she was sentenced to an imprisonment of seven years for theft, forgery and cheating. Unfortunately, her years spent behind bars did not deter her from resuming her schemes of deception shortly after her release from prison in 2008.

In 2009, Ginny set up CLAN Franchise Alliance Pte Ltd (CLAN), a company which operated tuition centres for primary school students. CLAN in turn managed several project companies, with one project company supposedly running a tuition centre. Though Ginny was an undisguised bankrupt, she was actively involved in the management of CLAN.

Ginny marketed CLAN as a viable investment to various persons, promising them lucrative returns if they invested into CLAN to fund the setting up and operating of the tuition centres. However, what she marketed was far from the reality. CLAN did not have any sustainable revenue-generating activity. Four of the six supposed tuition centres did not even have operating premises. Furthermore, to get the funds to tide over financial difficulties faced by the two centres which had rented premises, Ginny lied to potential investors that there was student enrolment and that these other four centres would be set up.

Between 2011 to 2012, Ginny met two other persons and touted to them her expertise in the brokering of trades in banking instruments. Ginny was able to convince them to sign agreements to invest S$156,000 and US$200,000 respectively in the trading of medium-term notes on a trading platform. However, the trading platform was non-existent, and the agreements were forged. As Ginny had no way to repay the investors their promised returns, she forged several bank documents, agreements and even email correspondence to allay their concerns and maintain the façade that their repayments were incoming. A total of 67 charges which included cheating, forgery, managing a company as an undisguised bankrupt and as a disqualified individual and engaging in fraudulent trading were tendered against Ginny. We proceeded on 31 of these charges. Ginny pleaded guilty to the charges and was sentenced to seven years’ corrective training on 18 September 2018.

**PP V NG CHONG KEEW & OTHERS**

In November 2017, the CAD commenced investigations into a suspected criminal syndicate that used nine business entities, comprising both training providers and employer companies, to make training grant claims with SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG). Close to S$40 million was paid out by SSG on their claims over six months.

Four key syndicate members fled Singapore before the CAD commenced investigation. In the ensuing months, we worked closely with foreign counterparts to track their whereabouts. With the cooperation and assistance of authorities in China, Hong Kong and Malaysia, all four are currently in Singapore to face charges.

To date, 16 persons have been charged in Court with more than 500 charges relating to criminal conspiracy, cheating, use of forged documents, money laundering, failure to exercise reasonable diligence as directors of the business entities, and perversion of justice. These 16 persons include Lee Chi Wai and Quek St Guang Roger, who have been convicted and sentenced to imprisonment for their offences.
**SkillsFuture credit: $6.7m cash, 11kg gold kept in Sengkang flat**

A man who allowed his sister to keep ill-gotten gains in a safe in his flat failed for money laundering.

**57x353**

**accounts and bought a car using part of the monies.**

**57x377**

**bought 6kg of gold bars worth $626,500.**

**67x8**

**A new technique for testing food**

**11 kilograms of gold (value of about $625,000) in a safe known as the Glycaemic Index.**

**517x523**

**Lee Lai Leng also took to the airport between 2009 and 2014.**

**17.2 per cent of adults, 31 per cent of teenagers, and 30 per cent of young adults.**

**Mr Gan said Malaysian Health Minister Dzulkefrac Al-Bakri said the government was considering introducing such a tax.**

**Lee Lai Leng also took to the airport and officers who arrived at the scene found Mr Lin lying motionless.**

**Lee Lai Leng was conscious and turned over the body to the police and medical officers.**

**Xavier Wan was convicted of 15 counts of offences under forgery, cheating and criminal breach of trust.**

**Between 2009 and 2014, Xavier Wan embezzled more than $600,000.**
Debt collection firm boss jailed 30 weeks, fined $80,000 for falsely claiming to be legal consultant

Tan Kian Tiong, 52, the sole proprietor of Double Ace Associates (DAA), was sentenced to jail for 30 weeks and fined $80,000 on Jan 2, 2019, for committing fraud.

He will be appealing against the sentence and is currently out on $30,000 bail.

Mr Lee added that Tan quickly removed the parts of the DAA’s letters that were in breach of the law.

He pleaded guilty in November 2016 to 40 counts of being an unauthorised person acting as an advocate and solicitor and 20 counts of falsely stating that his sole proprietorship was a “limited liability partnership”. Tan was sentenced to 30 weeks’ imprisonment and $300,000 fine on Jan 9, 2019. This sentence takes into consideration his remaining 1,083 proprietors waive the right to sue for a “legal erratum” and instead have no action in society.

Tan had obtained the template for these letters of demand from the Internet as well as actual letters of demand sent out by various law firms, and then made some modifications to suit his purposes. He then instructed his employees to use this standard format to send out all of Double A’s letters of demand.

On behalf of his clients, Tan sent out letters of demand to their debtors, threatening legal proceedings. These letters falsely stated that Double Ace was a “legal consultant” and a “limited liability partnership”. The reality was that Tan did not have a certificate to practice law, nor was his name listed on the Roll of the Supreme Court of Singapore.

On 26 November 2018, Tan pleaded guilty to 40 counts of being an unauthorised person acting as an advocate and solicitor and 20 counts of falsely stating that his sole proprietorship was a “limited liability partnership”. Tan was sentenced to 30 weeks’ imprisonment and $300,000 fine on Jan 9, 2019. This sentence takes into consideration his remaining 1,083

At the time of publication, Tan’s appeal against his sentence is ongoing.

PP V TAN KIAN TIONG

Tan Kian Tiong (Tan) is the sole proprietor of a debt collection business, Double Ace Associates (Double Ace). He had been a debt collector for about 20 years.

The court had previously found that Tan sent out letters of demand to all alleged debtors of his clients, using a template found on the Internet and modifying it to suit his purposes. He then instructed his employees to use a standard format for all DAA’s letters of demand.

The case came to light on Aug 18, 2016, when a 65-year-old woman received a letter from him, and showed it to her lawyer for his advice.

Another woman received a letter of demand from DAA in June 2015 and wrote a complaint letter to the Law Society, asking for an investigation.

The court heard that Leong’s duties at Spring Singapore included assessing applications and claims for the Innovation and Capability Voucher (ICV) scheme.

The vouchers, each worth $5,000, were given to small and medium-sized enterprises to develop their capabilities.

Deputy Public Prosecutor Norman Yew said at an earlier court hearing that the ICV scheme operated on a “reimbursement basis”. Applications were submitted online to obtain Spring Singapore’s approval to buy an item or service from a solution provider, he said.

Each application had to be accompanied by documents, including a quotation from the solution provider.

The court heard that Leong had abused the trust placed in him and exploited the scheme for his own benefit.

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Deputy Public Prosecutor Norman Yew said at an earlier court hearing that the ICV scheme operated on a “reimbursement basis”. Applications were submitted online to obtain Spring Singapore’s approval to buy an item or service from a solution provider, he said.

Each application had to be accompanied by documents, including a quotation from the solution provider.

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REPORT BY FINANCIAL INVESTIGATION GROUP

The Financial Investigation Group (FIG) underwent a reorganisation in 2018 and comprises five divisions: Financial Investigation Divisions I & II, Transnational Fraud Division, Specialised Commercial Crime Division and the Policy and Operations Division. The FIG investigates mainly into money laundering, terrorism financing, fraud involving employees of financial institutions, and a variety of fraud committed by domestic parties and transnational syndicates. The FIG also renders formal and informal forms of international cooperation, as well as shapes law enforcement policy relating to money laundering and terrorism financing.

The Year in Review

The total number of reported crimes increased by 1.4% from 32,668 cases in 2017 to 33,134 cases in 2018. The increase in the number of reported crimes was largely due to a rise in scam cases, such as e-commerce scam, credit-for-sex scam and China officials impersonation scam. Upon observing the upward trend in scam cases during the year, we worked with our SPF colleagues to play a greater role in stemming the rise in such scams.

We remained very focussed in our efforts to combat money laundering. In 2018, 133 persons were prosecuted for money laundering offences, an increase of 51% compared with 88 persons in 2017.

Transnational Commercial Crime Task Force

The Transnational Commercial Crime Task Force (TCTF) was operationalised in October 2017 specifically to combat internet love scams, which rose significantly that year. Since its inception, TCTF has frozen over 700 bank accounts and recovered at least S$1.5 million. The number of internet love scam cases fell by 20.1% from 826 cases in 2017 to 660 cases in 2018. The total amount cheated fell from around S$37 million in 2017 to S$27.5 million in 2018.

As the TCTF model proved successful, its scope was expanded in April 2018 to cover other transnational scam types, including scams involving the impersonation of domestic and foreign government officials and credit-for-sex scams. In 2018, the TCTF was successful in bringing down the numbers of internet love scams, ICA impersonation scams. Microsoft scams and tech support scams reported. However, credit-for-sex scams and China officials impersonation scams increased. The growing sophistication of foreign criminal syndicates in masking their locations and the flows of their criminal proceeds through non-conventional means posed challenges for the TCTF. It will continue to engage stakeholders and foreign law enforcement agencies to tackle these syndicates.

E-FECT: Tackling E-Commerce Scams

A common and fast increasing scam is the e-commerce scam which is defined as non-delivery of products or services that are being promoted or sold on online marketplaces such as Carousell, Qoo10, Lazada, Gumtree, Shopee etc; or by independent online shops such as blogshops.

Over the past three years, e-commerce fraud cases amounted to approximately 25% of class five commercial crime statistics. Of notable concern was a 58% increase (or 469 cases) in the number of e-commerce fraud cases from 808 to 1,277 cases between January and June 2018 as compared to the same period in 2017.

It was felt that a dedicated unit to investigate into e-commerce scams committed by syndicates could help stem the rise in e-commerce scams, as syndicates were responsible for a high number of such scams. The E-Commerce Fraud Enforcement and Coordination Team (E-FECT), was operationalised in November 2018 for a two-month trial, to see if such an outfit could provide sufficient “bang for the buck”.

E-FECT was very successful within its two-month trial, delivering impressive results. 26 e-commerce scammers were arrested, more than 230 e-commerce scams were solved, and 90 bank accounts used by the scammers were frozen. Nearly 150 monikers/accounts and close to 120 online advertisements suspected to be placed by scammers on various e-commerce platforms were removed. This helps to prevent new victims from being scammed.

Given the sterling results produced by E-FECT, a decision was made for it to continue on a permanent basis.

Combating crimes with our local and foreign partners

We have embarked on several initiatives under the framework of the Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism Industry Partnership (ACIP). The first is business email compromise fraud. Working closely with our eight ACIP member banks, the Commercial Affairs Department (CAD) seized more than S$2.7 million in illicit funds in six months. We have also commenced case specific collaboration with the ACIP member banks on trade-based money laundering, which is usually difficult to detect. We hope that greater information sharing could result in better sense-making and mitigation of the risks faced by the industry. We will continue to work with ACIP in our fight against illicit funds.
In line with our anti-money laundering strategy to deprive criminals of the proceeds and instrumentalities of the crime, we started equipping the SPF investigation fraternity with financial investigations skills. In 2018, the CAD, the Criminal Investigation Department and the Home Team School of Criminal Investigation continued rolling out Basic Financial Investigation training for the SPF investigation fraternity to equip them with financial investigations expertise. At the end of 2018, more than 1,000 SPF officers are trained in basic financial investigations.

The FIG also worked with local law enforcement counterparts to seize and confiscate proceeds of crimes to deprive criminals of their illicit gains and also the resources to fund their fraudulent activities. In April 2018, Tan Hock Chwee, who was previously remanded by the Singapore Customs for his involvement in illicit tobacco activities was ordered to pay $31.5 million (which we established through financial investigation to be his unexplained wealth) to the State in satisfaction of the confiscation order made by the High Court against him.

In addition, collaboration between the FIG and major banks in Singapore resulted in the swift arrest of two Libyan Nationals, who travelled to Singapore solely to assist a foreign criminal syndicate to collect and resell goods that were purchased using fraudulently obtained credit cards.

We also worked closely with our foreign law enforcement counterparts to eradicate overseas syndicates targeting Singaporeans. For example, we launched a joint investigation with the Indonesian National Police into a case involving transnational fraudsters who targeted online merchants in Singapore and Indonesia to commit offences with stolen credit card details. That syndicate was successfully crippled.

A successful conviction was also made in close cooperation with our overseas counterparts. The case involved an American who laundered part of his scam proceeds from a transnational scam using our financial system whilst he deliberately remained outside Singapore. We also shared information on internet love scams with the Royal Malaysian Police and Hong Kong Police, resulting in the arrests of 16 Malaysians, two Nigerians and one Chinese national in Malaysia.

In April 2019, one Singaporean was charged for proliferation financing, in 2018, three individuals, looking to make a profit from arms sales, were involved in a proliferation finance network. In October 2018, we sent direct mailers to more than 84,000 businesses to raise awareness on business email impersonation scam and share prevention tips.

We have worked with the National Crime Prevention Council to revamp the anti-scam website. The anti-scam website is a one-stop resource point to allow the public to keep abreast of the latest scams and learn about prevention measures. The revamped website now features a live chat function with an anti-scam helpline operator so that members of the public can seek advice on scam situations more easily.

From our cases, we noted that a significant portion of victims are aware of the existence of scams and our crime prevention advice. However, they still fell prey to scammers because they thought that they themselves would not be a victim to scams. In other words, many people still became victims despite having known about the scams through our various outreach initiatives. It remains a challenge for us to convince potential victims to exercise greater care so as not to be a victim of scams.

**Looking Forward**

The fight against scams will remain one of our priorities in 2019. We need to ensure that we are one step ahead of the perpetrators, and strive to be more effective in our anti-scam efforts.

The Corruption, Drug Trafficking and Other Serious Crimes (Confiscation of Benefits) Act (CDSA) and the TOFA were recently re-enacted to enhance the protection for individuals and legal entities who are involved in money laundering and terrorism financing. The Courts are also able to decide on the basis of the evidence presented by the Prosecution that a drug dealing or serious offence had indeed been committed overseas, without having to rely on foreign government officials or experts. This will improve our ability to tackle transnational money laundering.

We will also continue to prevent our financial system from being used for money laundering/terrorism financing, strengthened by close working relationships with our local and foreign partners, and explore ways to more effectively combat commercial crime.

**Community Outreach**

**Crime prevention is of utmost importance to us. We actively engage the victim in new arrests/prosecutions and share crime prevention tips.**

We have intensified our efforts in reaching out to the masses, including outdoor advertising, television and radio commercials. In the past year, we started exploring the use of direct outreach methods, which includes the sending of SMS blasts and direct mailers to prone target groups. In October 2018, we sent direct mailers to more than 84,000 businesses to raise awareness on business email impersonation scam and share prevention tips.

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**Ivan Wong**

*Deputy Director*

Financial Investigation Group

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**CASE HIGHLIGHTS OF FINANCIAL INVESTIGATION GROUP**

**Man who duped US songwriter of $792k jailed for a year**

The accused, David John Plate (Plate), is an international scammers who cheated a victim in the United Kingdom of £350,000, and thereafter deliberately laundered part of his scam proceeds through the Singapore banking system.

In July 2014, Plate convinced his victim to remit £350,000 to a bank account in the United Kingdom for the purpose of investment. After the funds were received in the aforesaid bank account, Plate instructed the victim in the United Kingdom to transfer the funds to various overseas bank accounts, including an account maintained by Aglobal Management Pte Ltd in Singapore. He then instructed his accomplice in Singapore to make further funds transfers. Notably, Plate had diverted money laundering offences to be committed in Singapore while he was overseas.

The CAD worked closely with its foreign counterparts to obtain evidence that Plate was the actual scammer and prime mover behind this money laundering scheme. On 23 April 2018, Plate was sentenced to 12 months’ imprisonment for abetting the dishonest receipt of stolen property under Section 411(1) of the Penal Code read with Sections 103 and 108B of the same Act and abetting the transfer of the benefits from criminal conduct under Section 47(1)(b) of the Corruption, Drug Trafficking and Other Serious Crimes (Confiscation of Benefits) Act read with Sections 109 and 108B of the Penal Code.

**PP V DAVID JOHN PLATE**

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**PP V LIM AI TEE**

The CAD investigated into Lim Ai Tee (Limi), a serial money mule for offences under Section 47 of the Corruption, Drug Trafficking and Other Serious Crimes (Confiscation of Benefits) Act (CDSA), pursuant to complaints that her Singapore bank accounts were used to receive fraudulent funds derived from various frauds.

Sometime in the middle of 2012, Lim got to know "Angie" after receiving an overseas phone call from the latter. Lim subsequently agreed to allow her bank accounts to be used to receive monies on behalf of a wire transfer for a fee. Lim started to receive significant sums of monies from December 2012 onwards in her bank accounts on behalf of Angie and also received monies from other money mules on Angie’s instructions.

**Source:** The Straits Times © Singapore Press Holdings Limited. Reprinted with permission.

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**THE STRAITS TIMES | APRIL 24, 2018**

**THE STRAITS TIMES | NOV 16, 2018**

**Man who duped US songwriter of $792k jailed for a year**

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**Jail, fine for woman who received benefits of criminal conduct totalling almost $800k**

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**Source:** The Straits Times © Singapore Press Holdings Limited. Reprinted with permission.
On 4 March 2013, Lim was interviewed by the CAD in relation to the transactions in her bank accounts. Lim was aware of the legal requirement to make a declaration in relation to the movement of more than S$30,000 (as it was then) out of Singapore. However, on Ang’s instruction, Lim did not make any declaration in relation to the movement of a total of S$663,392 out of Singapore on four occasions. In addition, she collected a sum of S$145,000 from a first-layer money mule on behalf of Ang even though she had reasonable grounds to believe the said property was Ang’s benefits from the criminal conduct.

Investigations revealed that the latter sum was derived from a business email compromise scam.

Despite being advised during the said interview on 4 March 2013 not to deal with Ang or dubious funds, Lim continued to assist Ang to receive monies in Singapore, this time round, from other money mules and hand them to third parties. In total, Lim collected at least S$1,607,820 in cash and benefitted around S$16,700 from these transactions. Investigations revealed that a significant portion of these funds were derived from business email compromise scams.

Lim was charged with four counts of money laundering offences under Section 47(3) of the CDSA and four counts of failing to declare cash above S$30,000 moved out of Singapore under Section 48C of the CDSA. On 16 November 2018, she was convicted on three charges – two charges under Section 47(3) and a count under Section 48C of the CDSA, while the remaining five charges were taken into consideration – and was sentenced to 36 months’ imprisonment and a fine of S$8,000.

Between April 2013 and June 2017, Ariel misappropriated nearly S$4 million from the company by issuing false claims to various bank accounts in Philippines belonging to himself, his family and friends. Ariel covered up his embezzlement by submitting false journal entries to an external firm in India which maintained the financial and accounting records of the company. The CAD detected the misappropriation through financial intelligence information. The company was unaware of it prior to being contacted by the CAD.

By the time investigations commenced, most of the embezzled funds had already been remitted out of Singapore. On 17 August 2018, Ariel was charged with five counts of criminal breach of trust under Section 408 of the Penal Code, 36 counts of falsification of company accounts under Section 477A of the Penal Code, and 241 counts of transferring the proceeds of criminal conduct under Section 471(b) of the Corruption, Drug Trafficking and Other Serious Crimes (Confiscation of Benefits) Act.

At the time of publication, the court proceedings are ongoing.

Between 22 and 29 July 2018, Faiz met Shafyana, Qairunisha and Zafirah on two occasions and gave them a total of 15 pieces of counterfeit S$100 notes. Shafyana, Qairunisha and Zafirah then used eight pieces of the counterfeit notes at various locations for their purchases.

The CAD officers established the identities of the suspects through extensive investigations and ground enquiries. On 29 July 2018, the CAD mounted a two-day operation to trace and arrest the four suspects. On 1 August 2018, the four were charged in court and they each face between five and 15 charges for possessing and using counterfeit currency notes as genuine. At the time of publication, the court proceedings are ongoing.

On 10 November 2018, Ng Kheng Wah, a Singaporean charged with supplying luxury items to North Korea, will be back in court on Monday. The Singaporean is accused of breaching the United Nations Act and 241 counts of transferring the proceeds of criminal conduct under financial intelligence information. The company was unaware of it prior to being contacted by the CAD.

Between 15 and 22 July 2018, Shafyana, Qairunisha, Binte Rosmani (Qairunisha’s mother) and Zafirah Binti Aziz (Zafirah), about this scheme. They agreed to participate.

PP V T SPECIALIST INTERNATIONAL (S) PTE LTD

On 19 July 2018, Ng Kheng Wah, a Singaporean, and T Specialist International (S) Pte Ltd (T Specialist), a company registered in Singapore, were charged in court with 80 counts of breaching Regulation 5(a) of the UN-DPRK Regs.

This contravenes the United Nations Act and 81 cheat-charges. They can even be relieved of all their assets if they are convicted of the offence.
Court orders more than $1.5m to be confiscated

Lydia Lam

Sentenced to nine months’ jail in 2013 for storing more than 307 cartons of contraband cigarettes, Tan Hock Chee also had a cash, luxury watch and bank deposits confiscated from him then.

Now, the 68-year-old has been issued a confiscation order for more than $1.5 million by the High Court after a further probe – $800,000 of which had been used to buy a terrace house, and the rest coming from the increase in value of the house.

After Tan was sentenced in 2013, the Commercial Affairs Department (CAD) found that he had “significant wealth that could not be satisfactorily accounted for”.

In a joint statement with the police and Singapore Customs, the CAD said it established that Tan had accumulated $875,286,704 of unexplained wealth between Jan 1, 2009, and July 25, 2012. He used part of this to buy a terrace house in 2010 which subsequently experienced a capital gain of around $700,000.

“This capital gain is also regarded as part of Tan’s benefits from criminal conduct,” said the agencies.

Anyone who is convicted of a serious offence under the Second Schedule of the Corruption, Drug Trafficking and Other Serious Crimes (Confiscation of Benefits) Act can have the benefits derived by him from criminal conduct confiscated.

lydialam@sph.com.sg

PP V TAN HOCK CHEE

On 25 July 2012, Tan Hock Chee (Tan) was arrested by the Singapore Customs for storing duty-unpaid cigarettes, an offence under the Customs Act. On 27 July 2012, Tan was charged for three offences under the Customs Act. He was subsequently convicted and sentenced to nine months’ imprisonment on 3 July 2013.

In the course of investigation, Singapore Customs and the CAD seized $437,740.71 in cash and bank deposits, and a luxury watch valued at $14,200 from Tan. A caveat was also lodged on Tan’s two-storey terrace house along Upper Thomson Road.

Our financial investigation established that between January 2009 and 25 July 2012, Tan had accumulated unexplained wealth of $875,286,704. $590,000 of this amount was used to make part payments for his landed property. The property had since appreciated in value, resulting in a valuation gain of $700,000. This is regarded as part of Tan’s benefits from criminal conduct. The total benefits derived by Tan from criminal conduct amounted to $1,575,286,704.

On 17 April 2018, the High Court issued a confiscation order of $1,575,286,704 against Tan. Under Section 5(1) of the Corruption, Drug Trafficking and Other Serious Crimes (Confiscation of Benefits) Act, any person who is convicted of a serious offence is subject to have the benefits derived by him from criminal conduct confiscated.

This case shows that notwithstanding the accused was imprisoned for his predicate offences, we will nonetheless seek to have ill-gotten gains confiscated, so that the accused does not enjoy his benefits from criminal conduct.

PP V SIKDER SUJAN, ALAMGIR MD AND SOLEMAN ALAM

On 10 December 2017, Sikder Sujan (Sikder), Alamgir Md (Alamgir) and Solaiman Alam (Solaiman) were in a rented room in a shophouse along Rower Road when they were approached by four men, who identified themselves as “CID officers”. The four men, who were in fact impersonating the Police, robbed the trio of $300,000 in their possession.

The trio lodged a report with the Police and stated that the cash had been collected from Bangladeshi workers who wanted to remit their earnings to Bangladesh. Despite being victims of a robbery case, Sikder, Alamgir and Solaiman were investigated by the CAD for not possessing the requisite licences to carry on a remittance business as required under Section 6 of the Money-changer and Remittance Businesses Act.

Investigations revealed that the unlicensed remittance business had been in operation between December 2015 and December 2017. During this period, both Sikder and Alamgir did not have any business establishment in Singapore and were not licensed by the Monetary Authority of Singapore to operate remittance services in Singapore. Further investigations also showed that Sikder and Alamgir were in fact helping Sikder’s elder brother and Solaiman to collect the money. Solaiman would use the money collected from the workers to purchase electronic goods in Singapore and then export the goods to Bangladesh to resell them for a profit. Thereafter, Sikder’s elder brother and Solaiman would dispose the money to the intended beneficiaries in Bangladesh.

Sikder and Alamgir were each charged with one count of conducting remittance businesses without a valid licence, which is an offence under Section 6(1) and punishable under Section 6(2) of the Money-changer and Remittance Businesses Act. Solaiman was issued a stern warning for an offence under Section 6(1) and punishable under Section 6(2) of the Money-changer and Remittance Businesses Act read with Section 109 of the Penal Code.

On 16 October 2018, Sikder and Alamgir pleaded guilty to their respective offences. Sikder was fined $24,000 while Alamgir was fined $12,000.

Separately, the four men who impersonated the Police to rob Sikder, Alamgir and Solaiman were arrested and charged by the Police Land Division with one count of gang-robbery under Section 395 of the Penal Code and one count of house-breaking by night under Section 446 of the Penal Code. At the time of publication, the court proceedings are ongoing.

PP V SOLLIHIN BIN ANHAR

Sometime in mid-2008, Sollihin Bin Anhar (Solihin) began orchestrating traffic accidents by using his workshops, E-Motors or Master Motors, as a cover. His syndicate comprised a network of recruiters and runners who would source for vehicle owners, phantom drivers and passengers to be part of the conspiracy.

Solihin was assisted by his accomplice, Rahmat Bin Mohd (Rahmat), who helped to coordinate the conveyance of vehicles to selected locations for “chain accidents” to be engineered. Rahmat would also stage the collisions in accordance to Solihin’s plans. They would then provide the accident details and sketch plans to the drivers or passengers involved (the conspirators) so that they could provide consistent accounts of the staged accidents.

Solihin and his recruiters lured their relatives, friends and acquaintances into the conspiracy by promising them free repairs, free paintwork or cash payments. Those recruited were also instigated to introduce more people to become phantom passengers for the conspiracy.

Mastermind of motor insurance scam jailed nine years

The scale and complexity of the conspiracy were unprecedented. Between 2009 and 2013, the syndicate was involved in more than 80 engineered accidents, involving more than 200 vehicles and 400 conspirators.

The offences came to light following police reports lodged by the affected insurers between January 2012 and March 2014. The CAD investigators worked tirelessly to establish the conspiracy amongst the parties in the motor insurance fraud syndicate.

Rahmat was convicted for 113 counts of engaging in a conspiracy to cheat under Section 420 read with Sections 109 and 116 of the Penal Code. He was sentenced to a total of 74 months’ imprisonment for the 25 charges that were proceeded with and 88 other charges were taken into consideration.

Meanwhile, Solihin, who played a bigger role in the whole conspiracy, faced 203 charges, which included 187 counts of engaging in a conspiracy to cheat under Section 420 read with Sections 109 and 116 of the Penal Code, 10 counts of attempting to pervert the course of justice under Section 204A read with Section 511 of the Penal Code, five counts of abetting the giving of false information to a public servant under Section 182 read with Section 109 of the Penal Code, and one count of abetment to reckless driving under Section 84(1) of the Road Traffic Act read with Section 109 of the Penal Code. Despite being strongly implicated, Solihin remained uncooperative and insisted on his innocence until 19 June 2018, when he finally decided to plead guilty. He was subsequently sentenced to a total of 108 months’ imprisonment for the 55 charges that were proceeded against him and 148 other charges were taken into consideration.

The syndicate had altogether cheated 16 insurance companies of about $1.6 million in fraudulent claims.


THE STRAITS TIMES | APR 19, 2018

THE STRAITS TIMES | JUN 19, 2018

THE STRAITS TIMES | JUN 5, 2018
PP V SIMOVICUS ROBERTAS AND VEJALIS EDVINAS

In September 2017, as a result of close collaboration between the CAD and major banks in Singapore, two Lithuanian Nationals, Simovicus Robertas (Robertas) and Vejalis Edvinas (Edvinas) were swiftly traced and arrested for being part of a foreign criminal syndicate. The syndicate had made online purchases of Formula One tickets, jewellery, perfumes and toiletries in Singapore, amounting to almost $320,000, by using fraudulently obtained credit card details. Robertas and Edvinas’ roles were to collect the goods that had been purchased using the fraudulently obtained credit card details, and thereafter resell the goods on online platforms.

In May 2018, Robertas was convicted for seven charges of abetment by conspiracy to commit cheating under Section 420 read with Section 109 of the Penal Code and he was sentenced to 36 months’ imprisonment. The remaining 13 similar charges were taken into consideration. Edvinas was convicted for two charges of failing to provide access to computer materials under Section 39(2)(b) of the Criminal Procedure Code and he was sentenced to six weeks’ imprisonment.

PP V ABRAM ROCK AND TALAT FARMAN

In mid-2017, Abraham Rock (Abraham) decided to fake the death of his mother, Talat Farman (Talat), in order to obtain payouts from insurance companies and the Central Provident Fund (CPF) Board. Between July 2017 and February 2018, Abraham purchased insurance policies from Great Eastern Life Assurance (Great Eastern) and MSIG Insurance (MSIG) for Talat and extended Talat’s Dependents’ Protection Scheme insurance policy with NTUC Income (NTUC).

Subsequently, Abraham purchased return air tickets to Pakistan and travel insurance policies from AXA Insurance (AXA) for him and his mother. The plan was for Talat to stay with her family in Pakistan while Abraham returned to Singapore. On 14 July 2018, Abraham and Talat flew to Pakistan but only Abraham returned to Singapore.

On 12 April 2019, Abraham was charged in court with eight counts of engaging in a conspiracy to cheat the CPF and Talat flew to Pakistan but only Abraham returned to Singapore on 14 July 2018.

Two days after his arrival in Singapore, Abraham reported Talat’s purported death to the Immigration and Checkpoints Authority (ICA). Subsequently, Abraham used forged documents that he purchased in Pakistan and ICA’s acknowledgement of receipt of Talat’s forged death certificate to submit insurance claims with the insurance companies and the CPF Board. AXA lodged a police report on the matter after discovering irregularities in the submitted documents relating to Talat’s purported death in Pakistan.

On 12 April 2019, Abraham was charged in court with eight counts of engaging in a conspiracy to cheat the CPF Board, NTUC, AXA, MSIG and Great Eastern. Abraham was also charged for giving false information to a public servant, making a false statement in a statutory declaration and fabricating evidence for use in a judicial proceeding. His mother, Talat, was charged with five counts of engaging in a conspiracy to cheat the CPF Board and several insurance companies.

At the time of publication, the court proceedings are ongoing.

PP V IMIRAN KASSIM

On 15 April 2019, Imran Kassim (Imran), a Singaporean, was charged in Court for providing money to support ISIS propaganda efforts for terrorist purposes, an offence under Section 4(b) of the Terrorism (Suppression of Financing) Act (TSOFA).

Imran has been detained under the Internal Security Act since August 2017. He had been investigated by the Internal Security Department and issued with a Detention Order for intending to undertake armed violence overseas.

A parallel investigation by the CAD also found that Imran had provided money amounting to $450 to an individual in Turkey on 31 October 2014 for the publication of ISIS propaganda. This act of providing money in support of terrorist purposes is a serious offence, regardless of the amount, under the TSOFA.

At the time of publication, the court proceedings are ongoing.

THE STRAITS TIMES | APR 13, 2019
Son, mum accused of bid to cheat insurers out of $3.7m by falsely declaring her death

 cab

ST PHOTO: WONG KWAI CHOW

THE STRAITS TIMES | APR 16, 2019
Singaporean charged over allegedly helping fund ISIS propaganda

ST PHOTO: PUB

EVENTS AND VISITS

- Former Deputy Commissioner of Police (Operations) Tan Chye Hee’s visit to the CAD on 15 April 2018.
- The Hong Kong Police’s visit to the CAD on 22 May 2018.
- The STRO participating in a workshop for Counter-Terrorism Financing Summit in Brunei Darussalam in August 2018.
- The STRO participating in the Regional Financial Intelligence Analyst Course in Brunei Darussalam from August to September 2018.
- Exchange of Memorandum of Understanding between the STRO and the Financial Intelligence Unit of Laos on 6 November 2018.
The ‘Coastal Clean-Up’ event to do our part to save the Earth, on 15 March 2019.

The ‘Walk for Rice’ event to raise rice for the needy families, on 2 November 2018.

“I would take this opportunity and writing here to say special thanks to [The Officer]. He manages to investigate and return back my money of S$1300 within a short period. He has shown his professionalism, efficient and great service. …”

– Victim

“He was professional and efficient in handling my case. He provided me with timely updates throughout the process.

It was a difficult period for me and I’m blessed to have [The Officer] to guide me through this journey and would like to express my sincerest appreciation to him and to all the police officers who have helped me in one way or another.”

– Victim

“She was a fantastic representative for STRO and contributed very effectively to the discussions.”

– Australian High Commission

“I would like to thank [The Officer] for being patient towards my incessant calls.”

– Victim

“On behalf of the SMU Constitutional Law and Criminal Justice Club, I would like to thank [The officers] for taking time out of your busy schedule to hold the Financial Crimes workshop. My sincerest apologies for not being able to receive you, but I trust that my Club managed to assist you while I was away.

The feedback from the students who came down for the workshop was very positive. The workshop with the hands-on activity was interesting where the students could try their hands at detecting counterfeit currency and credit cards. …”

– Singapore Management University

“I would like to compliment both [The Officer] from Bedok Division and [The Officer] from Commercial Affairs Department, who have helped me to get back my money.

[The officer] has been very patient when taking down my statement, and shared with me on how to identify scams. [The Officer] has work effortlessly to retrieve back my money. Once again, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to these two gentlemen.”

– Victim

“Special thanks to our strategic partner from CAD, [The Officer and his Team]! Despite he was on vacation leave last Friday, he sacrificed his own personal time joining us at the event and delivered a powerful keynote addresses to the audiences. Thanks for your help once again!”

– Mastercard

“I would like to compliment on the professionalism and the manner in which investigation officer demonstrated in a case which my wife was involved. Our experience with assisting the investigation was great and also learning. If there is scale of measurement, I would be happy to mark 10/10.”

– Victim

“A letter to express appreciation to SPF/CAD for the Joint Operation Silverliner and complimented you on your contributions to the operations.”

– Hong Kong Police Force

“Appreciate his assistance in helping the victim to get back all his hard earn CPF monies after court proceeding.”

– Victim

“I would like to commend and thank [The Officer] for his assistance with regards to my case. Thank you as I suffered no financial loss despite my late detection of the loss of my credit card. Thank you for all the assistance rendered in solving this case.”

– Victim

“The initial media articles on Carousell’s trust and safety efforts have come out in BT, ST and TNP. We wanted to record our thanks for your part in making this happen. This does give all of us at Carousell some validation of the investments in the past year and will go a long way in ensuring we keep our foot on the pedal. Appreciate your support and partnership!”

– Carousell
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