



U.S. Department of Justice

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PRESS RELEASE

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Jackson, Tennessee, Duo Sentenced in Fraud Scheme

Jackson, TN – Jennifer Azbill-Hall, 43, and Benjamin Vargason, 61, both of Jackson, Tennessee, have been sentenced to federal prison for their involvement in a bank fraud scheme. United States Attorney Kevin G. Ritz announced the sentences today.

According to United States Attorney Ritz and the information presented in court, Hall and Vargason were indicted in December 2019, in connection with a scheme to steal almost \$820,000 from B&H Finance between January 2015 and September 2018. According to the indictment, Hall opened fictitious accounts in the names of former customers of B&H Finance, where she was employed. Hall took out loans and forged endorsements on checks made payable to the customers and cashed the checks through Vargason's business, Great American Sports. Vargason deposited the checks in his company's account and kept a portion of the proceeds.

Hall was also sentenced in connection with a separate scheme to defraud JMS Restoration while employed there between July 2018 and July 2019. Hall used her access to the company's bank account to pay her mortgage and to transfer funds to CastleGate Kennels which was owned by her husband.

United States District Judge S. Thomas Anderson sentenced Hall to 30 months imprisonment followed by two years supervised release. Hall was also ordered to pay restitution of \$920,218.59 and a mandatory assessment fee of \$1,600. Vargason was sentenced to time served and placed on supervised release for three years with six months to be served in home confinement. Vargason was also ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$819,916.63. There is no parole in the federal system.

This case was investigated by the United States Secret Service and the Jackson, Tennessee Police Department.

United States Attorney Ritz thanked Assistant United States Attorney Carroll L. André III and former Assistant United States Attorney Matthew J. Wilson who prosecuted this case, as well as law enforcement partners who investigated this case.

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