



NEWS RELEASE

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SAN FERNANDO VALLEY MAN SENTENCED TO 9 YEARS IN PRISON FOR SCAM THAT COST NORTH CAROLINA VICTIM \$8.7 MILLION

A Burbank man was sentenced today to nine years in federal prison after being convicted earlier this year on charges related to a fraudulent investment scheme.

Thomas Mitchell Johnson, 53, was convicted in February on charges related to a scheme in which he defrauded a North Carolina man out of more than \$8.7 million through a bogus investment scheme.

Johnson was sentenced by United States District Judge R. Gary Klausner, who called the defendant "a parasite to the community."

The evidence presented at Johnson's trial showed that he represented himself to his victim-investor as a successful businessman with experience negotiating sophisticated transactions that he called "high-yield interest opportunities." Through his company, Zurich Capital Holdings, Inc., Johnson offered an investment opportunity to the victim-investor, promising to make investments only with the authorization of the victim-investor. In response to these promises, the victim-investor transferred \$10 million to an account Johnson controlled.

Despite his promises of secure and profitable investments, the evidence presented at trial showed that Johnson spent the victim's money on extravagant personal expenses for himself and his girlfriend including the purchase of two luxury homes in Burbank and a Bentley Arnage automobile. The victim-investor

ultimately lost more than \$8.7 million to Johnson.

Johnson was found guilty of six counts of interstate transportation of stolen property and five counts of money laundering.

The investigation was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

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