

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE MATTER OF THE SEARCH OF:

COMFORT INN & SUITES
669 RODI ROAD
ROOM 209
PITTSBURGH PA 15235

Magistrate No. 25-654

AFFIDAVIT IN SUPPORT OF SEARCH WARRANT

I, Armando Gonzalez Jr, being first duly sworn, hereby depose and state as follows:

1. I have been employed as a Postal Inspector with the United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS) since January of 2024. My duties include the investigation of crimes that involve the U.S. Postal Service and the U.S. mail. These crimes include mail fraud, mail theft, identity theft, burglaries and robberies of post offices, and counterfeit postal money orders. I am currently assigned to the External Crimes Team within the Pittsburgh Office and I have served as a member of the Financial Crimes Task Force of Southwestern Pennsylvania.

2. In the course of my training and experience, I have become familiar with the methods and techniques associated with the investigations of white-collar schemes to defraud. During these investigations, I have been involved in preparing and executing search warrants that have led to seizures of evidence of federal crimes.

3. This affidavit is submitted in support of an application for a search warrant, to search Room 209 of the Comfort Inn at 699 Rodi Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15235 (TARGET LOCATION), also described in Attachment A, and for the items described in Attachment B. Because this affidavit is meant only to establish probable cause for the sought after warrant, it does not include every fact known to me as part of this investigation.

PROBABLE CAUSE

4. Over the last year the U.S. Postal Inspection Service (USPIS) has seen an increase in mail stolen from the United States Postal Service (USPS) blue collection boxes. The theft of mail and checks from the collection boxes has led to the negotiation of counterfeit checks as well as bank customer impersonation frauds in Western Pennsylvania and throughout the United States. Mail theft is a violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1708. Bank fraud and conspiracy to commit bank fraud are violations of 18 U.S.C. §§ 1344 and 1349.

5. As a result of this activity, USPIS inspectors in Pittsburgh have utilized cameras, motion detection devices, and trackers in the USPS blue collection boxes located in areas known to experience high volumes of mail theft. These areas include Pittsburgh, PA, Penn Hills, PA, Millvale, PA, Mt. Lebanon, PA, and West Mifflin, PA.

6. On April 10, 2025, at approximately 2:28am, a covert camera installed by USPIS at the Penn Hills Post Office captured an incident of mail theft. The camera captured a white Chevrolet Camaro operated by a male subject. The subject is observed parking the vehicle directly next to the blue collection box, removing all the mail, and dumping it in the Vehicle.

7. The Chevrolet Camaro is a newer model vehicle, white body, with a black soft top/roof, and a black stripe/markings on the hood.

8. On the evening of April 13, 2025, USPIS inspectors placed a packaged GPS tracking device in the blue collection box at the Penn Hills Post Offices for the purposes of tracking the mail. During the evening of April 13, 2025, and early morning of April 14, 2025, USPIS inspectors conducted physical surveillance at the Penn Hills Post Office.

9. On April 14, 2025, at approximately 2:29 AM, a white Chevrolet Camaro is observed by USPIS inspectors arrive at the Penn Hills Post Office and park immediately next to

the blue collection boxes. Inspectors observed a male exit the vehicle, approach the blue collection box, and remove the mail contained within. The suspect places the removed mail into the vehicle.

10. The subject is observed as a black male, slim build, and wearing a dark and white colored hooded jacket. The suspect is also observed wearing a blue surgical mask.

11. Postal Inspectors approached the subject and vehicle with lights and sirens initiated, in an attempt to stop the subject. Upon seeing inspectors, the subject reentered his vehicle and fled the scene at a high rate of speed.

12. Utilizing the GPS tracking device placed in the mail, Postal Inspectors verified that the GPS tracking device was stolen and located at the Comfort Inn at 699 Rodi Rd, Pittsburgh, PA 15235. The Comfort Inn is located approximately 1.9 miles from the Penn Hills Post Office.

13. Upon arrival at the Comfort Inn, Postal Inspectors located the Chevrolet Camaro in the Comfort Inn parking lot. The located Chevrolet Camaro had the same aforementioned characteristics as the Chevrolet Camaro which had engaged in mail theft at the Penn Hills Post Office.

14. Postal Inspectors reviewed video surveillance at the Comfort Inn and located video of the Chevrolet Camaro arriving at approximately 2:32am.¹ The video further shows the suspect enter the front lobby wearing the same clothing worn by the mail theft suspect.

15. The suspect is captured on surveillance cameras walk through the lobby and enter the 2A hallway. As the suspect enters the 2A hallway, the suspect begins removing his jacket and places the jacket in front of door 209. The suspect is observed on surveillance video dropping a surgical mask on the ground while walking through the 2A hallway. After removing his jacket,

¹ This is the time reflected by the security system at the Comfort Inn, which may not be perfectly precise. All of the times that follow in this affidavit are based on the Comfort Inn security system.

the suspect is seen in the hallway wearing a white tank top style undershirt. The suspect is then seen leave hallway 2A. While leaving hallway 2A, the suspect's face is clearly captured on camera.

16. The Comfort Inn advised that the rooms on the second floor, which includes room 209, have access to the outside through an exterior sliding door located in the room.

17. At approximately 2:42am, surveillance video from the exterior of the "A" wing of the Comfort Inn, and in the immediate area of 209, shows a subject dressed in all black walking in the parking lot. Approximately one minute later, the Chevrolet Camaro is seen on video being parked on the "B" side of the Comfort Inn parking lot. The subject wearing all black is observed exiting the Chevrolet Camaro possessing a dark duffel bag. The suspect is observed on surveillance cameras walk past the lobby and towards the area of A209.

18. At approximately 2:50am, surveillance cameras from the Comfort Inn capture a black male stick his head out from room 209. Seconds later, the male dressed in all black exits room 209 carrying the black duffel bag and walks to the ice machine vending area on hallway 2A. The ice machine vending area is located three (3) doors from room 209. The male suspect enters the ice machine vending area and walks out seconds later without the duffel bag.

19. After reviewing the video, Your Affiant went to the ice machine and vending area located in the 2A hallway and discovered the dark duffel bag hidden in the room. Your Affiant observed the duffel bag laying on the ground, opened, and with numerous visible pieces of mail. A preliminary review of the duffel bag revealed it contained approximately 321 pieces of presumed stolen mail. The GPS tracker which was placed by inspectors in the blue bin collection box at the Penn Hills Post Office on April 13, 2025, was located in the duffel bag. Inspectors also discovered the trash bin in the ice machine and vending area contained a bag filled with mail.

20. While inside the hotel, Postal Inspector Staci McCoullough observed the subject (STEVEN IHSAN GOLDWIRE) exit room 209. Postal Inspectors in the hotel lobby area observed GOLDWIRE walkthrough the lobby wearing a white tank top style undershirt and dark pants. Your Affiant identified GOLDWIRE as the individual seen on video surveillance enter the Comfort Inn wearing the clothing similar to that worn by the individual that committed the mail theft at Penn Hills.

21. Postal Inspectors approached GOLDWIRE, in an attempt to identify him. GOLDWIRE was untruthful about the room in which he was staying. Postal Inspectors detained GOLDWIRE and determined he was in possession of two (2) cell phones and two (2) Western Union money orders made out to "Pittsburgh Water" and "Department of Transportation, presumed to be stolen. GOLDWIRE was also in possession of a surgical mask, which appeared similar to that worn by the suspect during the mail theft in Penn Hills.

22. Comfort Inn records revealed Steven Ihsan of 1624 East Howell Street Philadelphia, PA 19149, with a telephone number: 445-220-1756, was a guest staying in room 209. Further records reveal GOLDWIRE checked in at the hotel on April 10, 2025, with a reservation for four (4) nights.

23. Your Affiant knows that electronic devices, including computers, laptops, printers, and cellular phones, can be used in furtherance of mail theft, bank fraud, and conspiracy. Specifically, these items can be used to communicate with co-conspirators, store banking information, store personally identifying information, and create counterfeit checks.

CONCLUSION

24. Based on the information above, your Affiant submits that there is probable cause to believe that evidence, instrumentalities, and proceeds of mail theft, in violation of 18 U.S.C.

§ 1708, bank fraud, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1344, and conspiracy to commit bank fraud, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1349, are located in the TARGET LOCATION. Thus, your Affiant requests a warrant to search the TARGET LOCATION for the items described in Attachment B.

The above information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Armando Gonzalez Jr.
Armando Gonzalez Jr.
U.S. Postal Inspector,
U.S. Postal Inspection Service

Sworn and subscribed before me, by telephone pursuant to Fed. R. Crim. P. 4.1(b)(2)(A), this 14th day of April 2025.

HONORABLE MAUREEN P. KELLY
United States Magistrate Judge

Attachment A

Location to be Searched

The TARGET LOCATION is Room 209 of the Comfort Inn located at 699 Rodi Road,
Pittsburgh, PA 15235

Attachment B

Items to be Seized

1. All records relating to violations of Title 18, Sections 1708, 1344, and 1349, including:
 - a. Any and all records and information relating to the possession, sale, transfer, use, production, or trafficking of means of identification, counterfeit checks, account numbers, and other access devices associated with any financial institutions;
 - b. Any and all records of communications with financial institutions;
 - c. Mail, including business, Treasury, and personal checks, in names other than STEVEN GOLDWIRE or any other occupant of the hotel room;
 - d. Any and all records and information relating to mail and other financial documents not in the name of STEVEN GOLDWIRE;
 - e. Any and all records and information that provide evidence of control or ownership of the premises or a Chevrolet Camaro;
 - f. Any articles of clothing that are evidence of mail theft;
 - g. Any check-producing devices or equipment, including electronic devices like laptop computers, cellular phones, and printers, as well as any blank check stock, paper, or other materials used in the production of counterfeit checks;
 - h. Any passwords, password files, test keys, encryption codes or other information necessary to access the storage devices or data; and,
 - i. Any GPS units at either of the target locations.

The term “computer” includes all types of electronic, magnetic, optical, electrochemical, or other high speed data processing devices performing logical, arithmetic, or storage functions,

including desktop computers, notebook computers, mobile phones, tablets, server computers, and network hardware.

The term “storage medium” includes any physical object upon which computer data can be recorded. Examples include hard disks, RAM, floppy disks, flash memory, CD-ROMs, and other magnetic or optical media.