



International investment fraud syndicate: Brits plead guilty to alternative charges of cheating, sentenced to 6 months in jail



By [Audrey Dermawan](#) - March 17, 2023 @ 2:57pm

Sessions Court judge Zulhazmi Abdullah also ordered 48-year-old Lloyd George Bedwell (left) and 46-year-old Roger Hoi Wing Wu's (right) jail sentences to begin from the date of their arrest on Feb 21. - NSTP/DANIAL SAAD

BUTTERWORTH: The Sessions Court here today sentenced two United Kingdom citizens, who acted as managers of a boiler room of an international investment fraud syndicate, to six months in jail and a fine of RM100,000 for cheating two individuals out of RM52,781.81.

Sessions Court judge Zulhazmi Abdullah also ordered 48-year-old Lloyd George Bedwell and 46-year-old Roger Hoi Wing Wu's jail sentences to begin from the date of their arrest on Feb 21.

The sentences were meted out to Bedwell and Hoi after they pleaded guilty to two alternative charges of cheating Austrian nationals Trevor Ronald John Curtis and Kimberley John Buist Walker.

On the first count, Bedwell and Hoi, together with another person who is still at large, admitted to cheating Curtis by deceiving him into believing that he is guaranteed to make a significant profit from a short-term investment by purchasing shares in a company known as Devon Energy Corporation that they knew was not in existence. They induced him to transfer A\$8,991.92 into an RHB Bank Bhd account belonging to MB International Sdn Bhd.

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The offence, framed under Sections 417 and 34 of the Penal Code, was committed at Lot 7, Level 4, Island Plaza Tower, Jalan Tokong, here on Dec 16 last year.

Bedwell and Hoi, together with another person who is still at large, also admitted to cheating Walker by deceiving him into believing that he is guaranteed to make a significant profit from a short-term investment by purchasing shares in the same company. Walker also transferred A\$8,573 into the same RHB Bank Bhd account.

The offence, also framed under Sections 417 and 34 of the Penal Code, was committed at Lot 7, Level 4, Island Plaza Tower, Jalan Tokong, here on Jan 5.

Zulhazmi sentenced both Bedwell and Hoi to six months in jail and fined them RM50,000 for each of the charge.

He ordered the jail sentence to run concurrently.

The duo were initially charged on two counts under Sections 420 and 34 of the Penal Code. They claimed trial to both charges.

They then pleaded guilty to the alternative charges.

Deputy public prosecutors Ahmad Akram Gharib, Noor Azura Zulkifli and Afiqa Liyana Rozman prosecuted. Bedwell and Hoi were represented by Ashok Athimulan and Muniandy Vestanathan.

Earlier, Ahmad told the court that the prosecution would tender alternative charges.

When the charges were read out to the duo in English by the court interpreter, both nodded their heads to indicate that they understood the charges and they uttered "guilty".

Ahmad then tendered the relevant documents to the court.

Ashok told the court that the defence had submitted an application under Section 172C of the Criminal Procedure Code for a plea bargain.

This was confirmed by the prosecution who agreed to six months' jail and a fine of RM50,000 for each of the charge.

The jail sentence is to run concurrently.

"There are two signatures on these documents, which I believe belong to you.

"So I want to ask, Bedwell and Hoi, are these your signatures and did you sign them voluntarily?" Zulhazmi asked both the accused, to which they answered "yes".

Ahmad told the court that with the plea bargain, there was no need for mitigation, to which the defence agreed.

"By signing this (plea bargain), you have waived your right to appeal except on the legality of law," Zulhazmi said to the duo.

"The court accepts your guilty plea on the two alternative charges and the plea bargain.

"As such, you are sentenced to six months in jail and fined RM50,000 for each charge. The jail sentence is to run concurrently."

He then ordered the duo's passports to be held by the court until they had completed their sentences.

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According to the facts of the case, which Bedwell and Hoi acknowledged, both are British citizens involved in an international online fraud syndicate.

The syndicate has been established and operating in George Town, Penang, since 2016.

Following information received by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), an operation was carried out with the help of several government agencies on Feb 21.

Several premises in Penang and the Klang Valley that had been identified as "boiler rooms", or the syndicate's operations centres, were raided by enforcement agencies, including the one at Island Plaza Tower, which was where both Bedwell and Hoi were arrested.

It was learnt that the syndicate that both the accused were involved in had successfully defrauded thousands of victims around the world.

The syndicate's modus operandi is every day, a name list of potential victims would be sent to the boiler rooms. The name list is prepared and sent by the syndicate's headquarters based in Thailand via e-mail.

After receiving the list, Bedwell and Hoi, together with another person who is still at large, who were the managers of one of the boiler rooms, would instruct members of the syndicate to make phone calls to the victims assigned to them.

The duo also acted as the callers.

Based on investigations, there were evidence of Bedwell and the other person still at large contacting Curtis and Walker to deceive them.

Hoi had acted as the person responsible for determining the account Curtis and Walker needed to make payment into, confirming the receipt of the payment and contacting the syndicate's headquarters in Thailand to inform them about the payment made.

MACC, on Feb 21, busted an international investment scam syndicate that had raked in RM200 million from victims in Australia and the United Kingdom.

The graft-busters' covert operation, Op Tropicana, was held simultaneously at 24 premises in the Klang Valley and Penang without the involvement of the police.

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