

ALABAMA SECURITIES COMMISSION

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International Criminal Sentenced in Alabama for Committing Pig Butchering Scheme

Montgomery, Alabama (October 7, 2026) –Azzie Oliver, District Attorney for the 15th Judicial Circuit of Alabama, and Amanda Senn, Director of the Alabama Securities Commission (ASC), announced today that Kuan Tsou, age 28, was sentenced to five years, split to serve one year, for one count of conspiracy to commit aggravated theft by deception and conspiracy to commit financial exploitation of an elder person by the Honorable J. R. Gaines, Circuit Judge, 15th Judicial Circuit. Tsou has also been ordered to pay \$211,000 in restitution to his victim and is barred from ever participating in the securities industry in the State of Alabama. He has been in custody with the Montgomery Sheriff's Office since August 25, 2025.

Tsou assisted in facilitating a scam commonly referred to as "Pig Butchering," which typically begins when fraudsters send phishing messages via social media platforms, dating apps, and messaging apps. To entice individuals to respond, the fraudster uses stock photos of an attractive and successful person for their profile. Once the victim responds, the con artist begins building a relationship. During the conversation, the fraudster casually mentions that significant wealth can be achieved through cryptocurrency investments. When a user shows interest in crypto investing, the fraudster strikes. Victims are then instructed to deposit funds via an investment portal through a website created and controlled by the fraudster. The fraudulent account then reflects falsified returns. This creates the illusion that the victim's money is earning significant returns and encourages additional investments. When the victim attempts to withdraw their money, they are told that they must pay additional taxes or fees before the money can be released. This hefty bill, on top of the money already "invested" and lost, often leads to the victim's devastating realization that they are involved in a Pig Butchering scam.

In the Spring of 2025, a Montgomery, AL, victim, who was over the age of 60, began speaking with a female they met on Instagram who claimed to live in New York. The conversation was moved to the WhatsApp messaging app, where the victim formed a relationship with the female. She eventually mentioned investing in a cryptocurrency platform named "Bybit." While "Bybit" is a legitimate cryptocurrency exchange, the platform the victim was directed to was not the legitimate site. They initially invested \$45,000 and believed they had made a profit. The platform then "loaned" the victim \$160,000, which the victim repaid plus an additional \$6,000 for fees. After paying a total of \$211,000 to the fraudulent platform, the victim was told they owed approximately \$385,000 more. They attempted to withdraw some of their retirement funds to pay the owed amount, and the victim's investment adviser firm notified ASC of the suspected financial exploitation.

Through a home visit, ASC confirmed the victim was involved in a scam. With the victim's cooperation, ASC helped them negotiate with the scammer to "pay" \$300,000 in cash to cover the remaining owed payment. The scammer said they would send someone to Montgomery to pick up the \$300,000 from the victim; that person was later determined to be Kuan Tsou.

With the assistance of the Montgomery Police Department Special Operations Division, an arrest operation was coordinated for Tsou in the parking lot of a local grocery store. On August 22, 2025, the Montgomery victim drove with an undercover officer to the grocery store parking lot, where Tsou met them after having flown into Montgomery from California that morning. The victim gave Tsou a box containing what Tsou believed to be

\$300,000, but in fact contained cut-up paper. As Tsou exited the parking lot, he was stopped and arrested by Montgomery Police Department SWAT operators. During the investigation, it was learned that Tsou was part of a larger organization and had been traveling throughout the country for several months, picking up cash and precious metals from scam victims. Tsou was paid or pocketed a percentage of the funds he picked up from each victim. It was also learned that the female who was communicating with the victim was in Southeast Asia, not New York. The pictures the scammer sent to the victim showed a real individual living in New York. Other than pictures, there is no evidence tying the person in the pictures to this crime.

“Financial exploitation is a serious offense to the Commission. These criminals took advantage of an innocent individual and caused mental, emotional, and financial devastation to both the victim and their family,” ASC Director Amanda Senn said. “It is not often that we are able to intercept international criminal operations in cryptocurrency cases. I am extremely proud of the collaborative efforts between our special agents, the Montgomery Police Department, and the Montgomery Sheriff’s Office SWAT team in apprehending this criminal in real time and uncovering a larger criminal ring.”

After Tsou’s arrest, the victim continued to communicate with other unknown individuals online and send them money. ASC assisted the family in petitioning for a conservator to be appointed to manage the victim’s financial affairs by providing testimony in their court actions. The investigation revealed that the victim would have lost approximately \$600,000 - instead of losing only \$270,000 - in pig butchering scams without the intervention of their financial institution and ASC. After hearing evidence, the court declined to approve a conservatorship. The victim’s family remains concerned that with no intervention, the victim will continue to deplete their assets and become financially dependent.

“This case is just one example of the complex and tragic circumstances that surround these horrific attacks on the wellbeing of vulnerable adults. Law enforcement often struggles in its effort to protect vulnerable adults without stripping them of their dignity and freedom to make decisions in their everyday lives,” Senn said.

ASC thanks District Attorney Azzie Oliver, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Montgomery County Sheriff’s Office, and the Montgomery Police Department for their involvement in this case.

ASC cautions investors to thoroughly research any investment opportunity. Call ASC at 1-800-222-1253 and ask the Registration Department to check out persons offering investment opportunities, investment advice for a fee, and any products they offer. Contact ASC to report suspected fraud, inappropriate securities business practices, or to obtain consumer information. Free investor education and fraud prevention materials are available at www.asc.alabama.gov

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