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Dentist Says He Got Kickbacks For Sham NBA Health Invoices

By **Pete Brush**

Law360, New York (March 17, 2023, 5:51 PM EDT) -- A California dentist, pleading guilty in pro basketball's \$5 million benefits scam, told a Manhattan federal judge Friday that he took kickbacks as former NBA players cashed \$1.2 million worth of invoices he handed out despite doing no dental work.

Aamir Wahab, 43, entered his plea before U.S. District Judge Valerie E. Caproni. An indictment said he had worked chiefly with two former players, Terrence Williams and Keyon Dooling, to allow a large group of ex-players to siphon money from the NBA Players Health and Welfare Benefit Plan.

"Do you understand that what you were doing was illegal?" Judge Caproni asked the Chicago-born Wahab.

"Yes," he said, pleading guilty to a count of conspiracy to commit health care and wire fraud.

Judge Caproni set a July 25 sentencing date. As part of his plea, Wahab agreed not to appeal any sentence of 41 months or less. He also appears on track to be ordered to pay nearly \$1.2 million in restitution and to forfeit over \$458,000.

Williams and Dooling have both pled guilty and await sentencing, as have **the majority of** 24 total defendants charged by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York beginning in late 2021. Prosecutors say the group tried to cash a total of \$5 million of fake invoices starting in 2017 and succeeded in cashing about \$2.5 million.

At least six defendants, including former Boston Celtic Glen "Big Baby" Davis, **remain on track** for trial in May.

The 2022 indictment charging Wahab says that in 2019 he had extensive conversations with Williams about the scam. Wahab got a warning from Williams after Wahab balked at handing out more invoices from his Beverly Hills practice.

"Fine you can have the invoice but you gotta deal with the dudes direct to get the money," Wahab texted.

"We not gonna act like you doing dental work," Dooling said in reply.

Initially Friday, when asked by Judge Caproni if he knew he had committed a crime, Wahab answered no. But he then smoothly completed his guilty plea statement after a brief conversation with his lawyer.

"You didn't realize that you were going to get in this kind of trouble. Is that a fair statement?" Judge Caproni asked.

"Yes," Wahab said.

"That's different from not knowing it was illegal. Do you agree with that?" she asked.

"Yes," he said.

Counsel for Wahab declined to comment after Friday's hearing.

Wahab is represented by Michael Freedman of the Freedman Firm.

The government is represented by Daniel Nessim and Ryan Finkel of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York.

The case is USA v. Williams et al., case number 1:21-cr-00603, in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York.

--Editing by Karin Roberts.

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