

OFFICE OF THE  
**DISTRICT ATTORNEY**  
COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

**JOHN T. SAVRNOCH**  
District Attorney



06-741

RELEASE NUMBER

June 20, 2024

RELEASE DATE

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**Former Carpinteria Resident Sentenced to State Prison for Fraudulent Investment Scheme**

***Re: People v. Brett Edward Lovett, 17CR10694***

Santa Barbara County District Attorney John T. Savrnoch announced today that on June 18, 2024 the Honorable Judge Pauline Maxwell sentenced Brett Edward Lovett, a 53-year-old former resident of Carpinteria, California to 16 years, and 8 months in State Prison related to a sprawling investment scheme that targeted elderly and vulnerable victims across the state, including some members of his own church.

The defendant was a legal document assistant who held himself out as providing investment management. He solicited funds from his victims by claiming that he could keep their money safe and provide high returns on things like hotel and real estate investments. Instead of investing his victims' money, he used the money to purchase cosmetic procedures, vacations, first-class travel to India, and to pay back victims from a prior fraud case in which he was sued by the Commodity Futures Trading Commission.

The case was initially reported to the California Department of Insurance by a 78-year-old member of the defendant's Kingdom Hall congregation in Carpinteria. That victim reported that the defendant had stolen her life savings which caused her to become homeless. She also reported that he tried to use a power of attorney to get her committed to a mental institution when she complained to church elders about his theft. The Department's investigation uncovered numerous additional victims across California who entrusted their life savings to the defendant.

Based on that investigation, the District Attorney's Office filed 36 felony charges against the defendant including securities fraud, grand theft, forgery, elder abuse, residential burglary, money laundering and an aggravated white collar enhancement under Penal Code section 186.11 for thefts in excess of \$500,000.00. After a 9-week trial, a Santa Barbara jury found the defendant guilty of 29 felony counts, the white collar enhancement, and series of aggravating factors that the defendant targeted particularly vulnerable victims, that the crimes indicated planning, sophistication, or professionalism by the defendant, and that the defendant's crimes caused damage of great monetary value.

District Attorney John Savrnoch stated, "White collar crimes are particularly damaging to the elderly and the vulnerable, who often cannot financially recover from the loss of their life savings. Our Office will continue to zealously investigate and prosecute those individuals who prey on the most vulnerable members of our community. Thank you to the California Department of Insurance personnel for a thorough investigation, and to District Attorney Investigator Daniel Tagles and Senior Deputy District Attorney Casey Nelson for ensuring that justice was done in this case.

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