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## Luxury cars and private villas: See how Minnesota fraudsters spent millions intended for hungry kids

By [Jonah Kaplan](#), [Michael Kaplan](#)

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Luxury cars, private villas and overseas wire transfers: CBS News obtained dozens of files and photos that reveal how [Minnesota fraudsters](#) blew through hundreds of millions in taxpayer dollars as part of [one of the biggest](#) COVID-era fraud schemes.

The files document a spending spree in which defendants, many of Somali descent, took taxpayer money meant to feed hungry children and used it to buy cars, property and jewelry. Videos show them popping champagne at an opulent Maldives resort. In a text message, one defendant boasts: "You are gonna be the richest 25 year old InshaAllah [God willing]."

The documents feature exhibits from a recent federal trial, many of which are being made public by CBS News for the first time. The exhibits include:

- A confirmation email for a stay in an overwater villa with a private pool at Radisson



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A lakefront home presented as evidence in a Minnesota fraud trial.

Court exhibit

At the sentencing of a defendant who used taxpayer funds for cars and the Maldives vacation, 24-year-old Abdimajid Mohamed Nur, U.S. District Judge Nancy E. Brasel admonished him, saying: "Where others saw a crisis and rushed to help, you saw money and rushed to steal." He was sentenced to 10 years in prison and ordered to pay nearly \$48 million in restitution for his role in the fraud scheme.

Nur is one of dozens who siphoned hundreds of millions in stolen taxpayer funds —

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runned to al Snabaad, and prosecutors have yet to present any evidence linking any of the fraudsters to terrorism.

"The vast majority of the money that these folks made went to spending on luxury items for themselves," said Andy Luger, the former U.S. Attorney who led the office which prosecuted Nur and other related frauds from 2022 until January. "There was never any evidence that this money went to fund terrorism nor was there any evidence that was the intent of the 70 people we indicted."



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The defendants also transferred nearly \$3 million to accounts in Kenya.

Abdiaziz Shafii Farah, 36, who was sentenced to 28 years in prison last month for his role in the scheme, made six separate wire transfers worth more than \$1 million to banks in China between February and July 2021, according to records reviewed by CBS News.

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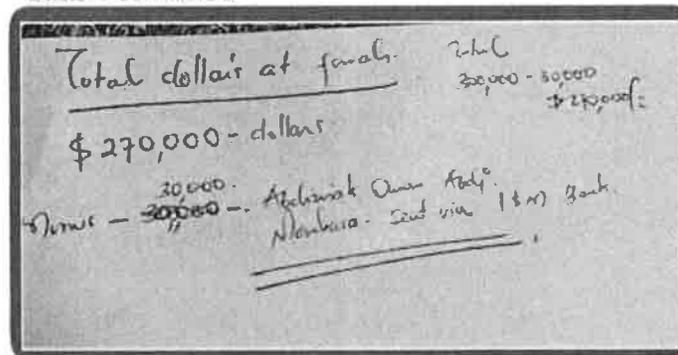
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12/9/2021 4:15:01 AM(UTC-6)



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\$270,000- dollars

12/9/2021 4:15:30 AM(UTC-6)

Cash

GOVERNMENT EXHIBIT H-52z 22-cr-124 (NEB/TNL)

12/9/2021 7:37:54 AM(UTC-6)

Is this from Amana bro?

This photo of a text exchange, presented in court, shows a box stuffed with cash and a message saying "\$270,000 dollars."

Court exhibit

In one text, Farah instructed someone to "please send \$1000 to Mogadishu bakara," an apparent reference to a one-time al Shabaab stronghold that was the site of the infamous 1993 "Black Hawk Down" incident in which 18 American servicemembers died.

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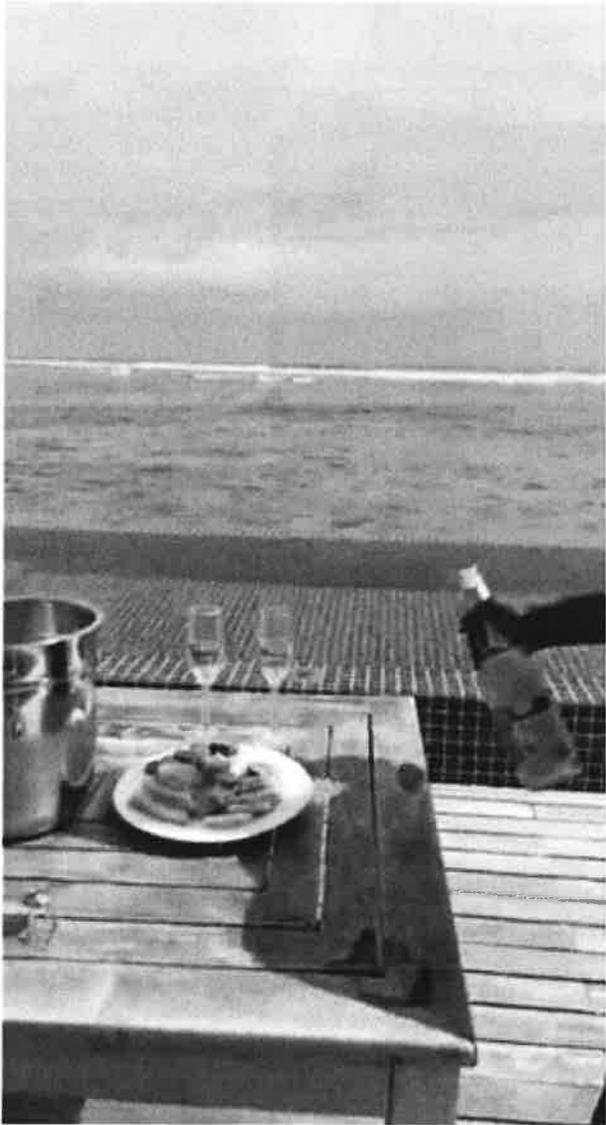


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travel to resorts in the Maldives, where in one video, Farah is seen popping champagne at a private pool villa in July 2021.



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"If there was a linkage in the money that they have stolen going to terrorism, then that is a failure of the FBI and our court system in not figuring that out," Omar said.

So far, federal prosecutors have convicted 61 people in the widening Minnesota fraud scandal. More investigations are ongoing.

[Pat Milton](#) contributed to this report.

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