

# Fake car loans and payroll scams send fraudulent College Station pastor to prison

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U.S. Attorney's Office, Southern District  
of Texas

HOUSTON – A 61-year-old man has been sentenced after pleading guilty to conspiracy to commit wire fraud, announced U.S. Attorney Alamdar S. Hamdani.

William Dexter Lucas pleaded guilty Dec. 8, 2022, for his role in orchestrating a scheme to steal funds from the Payroll Protection Plan (PPP) and various car dealerships by faking forms to obtain car loans.

U.S. District Judge Charles Eskridge has now ordered Lucas to serve 97 months in federal prison to be immediately followed by five years of supervised release. He was also ordered to pay \$286,359.14 in restitution to the Small Business Administration (SBA) and the victimized car dealerships.

In handing down the sentence, Judge Eskridge noted the lengths Lucas had gone to steal from his victims, including forging multiple documents and manipulating potential witnesses against him. The court also heard additional evidence describing Lucas' lengthy criminal history and refusal to acknowledge portions of his guilt.

“William Dexter Lucas, a con man who worked several schemes at once, cloaked himself in the robes of a fake church so he could defraud local businesses and steal from taxpayers,” said Hamdani. “And he stole not to give to the poor, but to line his own pockets with money meant to help those struggling with the ravages of the COVID-19 pandemic. Thankfully the law has caught up to William Lucas, giving him ample time to think over his past sins as he sits in a prison cell.”

At the time of the plea, Lucas admitted conspiring with several others to defraud car dealerships and the U.S. government from on or around 2017 to 2020. To facilitate his scheme, Lucas set up and claimed to operate the “Jesus Survives Ministry,” a church existing only on paper.

Upholding the title of “pastor” of the non-existent church, Lucas applied for a \$50,000 PPP loan to cover the fictitious payroll needs. Additionally, using one of roughly 20 different known aliases, Lucas applied for multiple car loans by submitting various fraudulent forms and financial statements.

In total, the scheme cost the SBA and various car dealerships across the country over \$400,000 in losses, leaving U.S. taxpayers to fund his fraud.

When authorities began investigating Lucas’s crimes, he attempted to cover them up by filing false claims of stolen identity with the Federal Trade Commission.

Previously released on bond, he was ordered into custody following the sentencing today where he will remain pending transfer to a U.S. Bureau of Prisons facility to be determined in the near future.

Homeland Security Investigations conducted the investigation with assistance from the SBA and Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration. Assistant U.S. Attorney (AUSA) Thomas Carter and former AUSA Zahra Fenelon prosecuted the case.

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