

California Woman Who Lost \$55 Million in Crypto Scam Seeks Federal Victim Protections

NEW YORK, NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, May 26, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Crypto attorneys Marc Fitapelli of [MDF Law](#) PLLC and David Silver of [Silver Miller](#) announced today that they have filed a motion in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia on behalf of a California physician who lost more than \$55 million from a sophisticated cryptocurrency fraud scheme tied to international cybercriminal organizations. The motion was filed in United States of America v. Approximately 225,364,961 USDT, Civil Action No. 25-cv-01907, pending in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia.

Silver Miller and MDF Law PLLC both specialize in helping cryptocurrency investors and fraud victims recover stolen funds arising from fake investment platforms, romance-investment scams, unauthorized account takeovers, and other forms of digital asset fraud. The firms believe that, collectively, they represent victims who have lost more than \$1 billion in these types of cryptocurrency scams.

The newly-submitted motion was filed pursuant to the federal Crime Victims' Rights Act ("CVRA"), 18 U.S.C. § 3771, and requests that the Court establish transparent and orderly procedures governing the return of cryptocurrency seized by the United States Government. According to the filing, the victim at issue was targeted through an elaborate online fraud operation in which scammers allegedly cultivated long-term romantic emotional relationships with victims while simultaneously convincing them to transfer funds into fraudulent cryptocurrency investment platforms designed to appear legitimate.

Although these scams are often referred to by law enforcement and the media as "[pig butchering](#)" schemes, counsel for cryptocurrency theft victims strongly object to the phrase.

"We believe the term 'pig butchering' is offensive and dehumanizing," said attorney Marc Fitapelli. "Victims are not pigs. They are human beings — often highly educated, hardworking, and emotionally vulnerable people — who were psychologically manipulated by sophisticated international criminal enterprises. The phrase minimizes the profound emotional and financial devastation suffered by victims," Mr. Fitapelli continued. "We refer to these matters as DECEVE cases — Deceptive Electronic Consumer Exploitation Via Engagement — because the traditional terminology fails to capture the sophistication of these schemes," said David Silver, often referred to as the original Crypto Advocate. "Like many things in crypto, everything appears legitimate on the surface. But when victims dig deeper, they discover the reality is very different

from what was represented. These are highly coordinated fraud operations built on deception, manipulation, and manufactured trust.”

The filing argues that victims currently have little visibility into how the Government intends to administer or distribute billions of dollars in seized cryptocurrency and asks the Court to establish procedures that ensure victims are heard before decisions affecting their property rights are made.

“Our client showed extraordinary courage by coming forward publicly,” said attorney David Silver. “Many victims remain silent because these crimes are deeply personal and humiliating. Our client is speaking out not only for herself, but for countless others who feel powerless and ignored,” Mr. Silver continued.

According to the motion, the victim suffered devastating personal and financial consequences as a result of the fraud, including enormous tax liabilities tied to transactions she believed were legitimate investments. The attorneys emphasized that the motion is not intended to delay the Government’s efforts, but rather to ensure that victims receive fair treatment, transparency, and meaningful due process protections before assets are distributed. The attorneys contend that victims presently have little visibility into how such decisions are made and limited ability to challenge or appeal determinations that may directly affect millions of dollars in property rights. The motion therefore asks the Court to exercise its authority under the Crime Victims’ Rights Act to establish a reasonable and transparent procedure before further distributions occur.

The motion also raises broader concerns regarding civil asset forfeiture, a process that has long been controversial because it permits the Government to seize and control property allegedly connected to criminal activity before victims or property owners receive meaningful judicial review. Counsel for the victim addressed in the motion argue that those concerns are magnified in modern cryptocurrency cases involving billions of dollars in digital assets, rapidly fluctuating values, complex tracing issues, and thousands of potential victims spread across multiple jurisdictions. The motion therefore asks the Court to establish transparent procedures and meaningful judicial oversight before further distributions of seized cryptocurrency occur.

“This is America,” Fitapelli added. “When the Government controls billions of dollars belonging to fraud victims, there must be checks, balances, accountability, and a process the public can trust.”

The matter is pending in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia. A copy of the motion is provided with this release.

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