

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF CONNECTICUT

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff

vs.

No. 3:21-cr-00087 (VAB)

DENNIS A. BRADLEY, JR.

Defendant

**DEFENDANT'S MOTION FOR JUDGMENT OF ACQUITTAL
PURSUANT TO FEDERAL RULE OF CRIMINAL PROCEDURE 29**

Defendant Dennis A. Bradley, Jr., by and through undersigned counsel, respectfully moves this Court, pursuant to Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 29(a), for a judgment of acquittal on all counts of the Superseding Indictment (ECF No. 50). The government has rested after calling twelve witnesses. Viewing the evidence in the light most favorable to the government and drawing all reasonable inferences in its favor, no rational trier of fact could find, beyond a reasonable doubt, *every essential element* of conspiracy to commit wire fraud (Count 1) or any substantive count of wire fraud (Counts 2–6).

I. LEGAL STANDARD

Under Rule 29, the Court must enter a judgment of acquittal if, viewing the evidence in the light most favorable to the government and drawing all permissible inferences in its favor, no rational trier of fact could find the essential elements of the crime beyond a reasonable doubt. [*United States v. Guadagna*](#), 183 F.3d 122, 129 (2d Cir. 1999). Acquittal is required where the

evidence of guilt is "nonexistent or so meager that no reasonable jury could find guilt beyond a reasonable doubt." Guadagna, 183 F.3d at 130. The government bears the burden of proving every element of every offense beyond a reasonable doubt. Speculation and conjecture cannot substitute for proof. United States v. D'Amato, 39 F.3d 1249, 1256 (2d Cir. 1994).

II. THE GOVERNMENT'S EVIDENCE IS LEGALLY INSUFFICIENT

The government's entire case rests on the theory that Mr. Bradley orchestrated a scheme to defraud the State of Connecticut and SEEC of \$179,850 in Citizens' Election Program ("CEP") grants by misrepresenting the nature of the March 15, 2018 Dolphin's Cove event and related filings. After calling twelve witnesses, the government has failed to prove any essential element of any charged count.

A. No Proof of Interstate Wire Transmissions

Wire fraud requires that each charged communication be transmitted "in interstate or foreign commerce." 18 U.S.C. § 1343. This jurisdictional element must be proven beyond a reasonable doubt as to each count. The government introduced no technical evidence, no routing data, no server logs, and no expert testimony on this element. Its two relevant witnesses—Ms. Laguex and Google records custodian Cory Gaddis—both expressly disclaimed the ability to establish interstate transmission.

1. As to the March 15, 2018 text message (Count 2) is devoid of any evidence of interstate communications and the law says when parties reside in the same state, that courts presume the communication is intrastate.

The government **introduced not a single witness, not a single document, not a single piece of technical evidence concerning the transmission of the text message charged in Count Two.** This is not a close case on a contested legal point — it is a complete evidentiary void.

The text message at issue — Mr. Bradley's 3:29 p.m. message to campaign staff — was sent and received by parties who were in and reside in Connecticut. No cell carrier was called. No telecommunications expert was called. No server records were introduced. No proof of travel over the internet. No routing data was offered. Nothing.

This matters because the statutory text of 18 U.S.C. § 1343 requires proof that the communication was transmitted "in interstate or foreign commerce" — meaning it must actually cross state lines. *As explained in [McCoy v. Goldberg](#), 748 F. Supp. 146, 154 (S.D.N.Y. 1990),* “The federal wire fraud statute does not cover telephone communications between persons within the same state.” *See also, [Cofacredit, S.A. v. Windsor Plumbing Supply Co.](#), 187 F.3d 229, 243 (2d Cir. 1999)*(“Purely intrastate communication is beyond the statute's reach.”)

For voice calls and SMS messages between parties residing in the same state, *courts presume* the communication is intrastate, and the *presumption is un rebutted here*. *See, [McCoy v. Goldberg](#), 748 F. Supp. 146, 154 (S.D.N.Y. 1990)*(“Where all parties are New York residents, all telephone calls are **presumed** to be intrastate and, absent any indication otherwise, the **predicate act of wire fraud is not stated.**”)(emphasis added); *see also, Harris Trust & Savings Bank v. Ellis*, 609 F. Supp. 1118, 1122 (N.D. Ill. 1985) (RICO claim dismissed where only alleged predicate acts of wire fraud were telephone calls between Illinois residents); *Utz v. Correa*, 631 F. Supp. 592, 596 (S.D.N.Y. 1986); *United States v. Freeman*, 524 F.2d 337, 339 (7th Cir. 1975) (wire fraud requires "an interstate telephone call"), *cert. denied*, 424 U.S. 920, 47 L. Ed. 2d 327, 96 S. Ct. 1126 (1976); *cf. United States v. DeBiasi*, 712 F.2d 785, 791 (2d Cir.), *cert. denied*, 464 U.S. 962, 78 L. Ed. 2d 339, 104 S. Ct. 397 (1983); *United States v. DeSapio*, 299 F. Supp. 436, 448 (S.D.N.Y. 1969) ("communication itself must be interstate"), *aff'd*, 435 F.2d 272 (2d Cir. 1970), *cert. denied*, 402 U.S. 999, 91 S. Ct. 2170, 29 L. Ed. 2d 166 (1971).

Simply put, the government has the burden; it cannot be presumed into existence. And the absence of proof is fatal. Indeed, **where the government presents a total evidentiary vacuum on a required element, no rational jury could find that element proven beyond a reasonable doubt.** *Guadagna*, 183 F.3d at 130. Accordingly, an acquittal on Count Two is independently required on this ground for this reason alone.

2. As to the eCRIS filings (Counts 3, 4, and 6): There was no “proof” the filings crossed state lines and an automatic backup is not part of the scheme within § 1343

The government has failed to prove the interstate element on these counts on two fully independent grounds.

First, the primary eCRIS transmission was intrastate and the government introduced no evidence to the contrary. "Satisfaction of the interstate-commerce element requires proof that the charged communications actually crossed a state or national border." *United States v. O'Donovan*, 126 F.4th 17, 34 (1st Cir. 2025).

Indeed, the only government witness on this subject was SEEC Clerk Sheri-Lyn Laguex — not an IT professional — who testified only that she *believes* eCRIS filings are sent to servers in Groton or Hartford, Connecticut and then backed up in Massachusetts. Ms. Laguex's "belief" is not proof able to satisfy the statutory element.

Her testimony does, however, affirmatively locate the primary servers *within* Connecticut. And where sender and recipient are in the same state, communications are presumed intrastate, and the government bears the burden of overcoming that presumption with actual proof. *McCoy v. Goldberg*, 748 F. Supp. 146, 154 (S.D.N.Y. 1990) (collecting cases).

Here, the government called no IT expert, no technical witness, no carrier representative, and introduced no routing data, server logs, or forensic evidence. The government's evidentiary

void is fatal.

Second, even if the Massachusetts backup were somehow deemed a "transmission," it cannot satisfy the interstate element as a matter of law. The wire fraud statute reaches only transmissions made for the purpose of executing such a scheme. 18 U.S.C. § 1343.

An automatic, server-side backup that occurs after an eCRIS filing has already been submitted to and received by SEEC in Connecticut is not "for the purpose of executing" any scheme. It is an incidental, post-transmission administrative process that Mr. Bradley did not initiate, did not direct, did not know about, and upon which the alleged fraud neither depended nor benefited in any way.

The Supreme Court addressed this principle in *Kann v. United States*, 323 U.S. 88, 95 (1944), holding that when defendants had already obtained the proceeds of their fraud, subsequent automatic bank-to-bank check clearings were not for the purpose of executing such scheme — the scheme had already reached fruition and the routine post-transaction clearing played no role in it.

The Court reinforced this in *United States v. Maze*, 414 U.S. 395, 400–01 (1974): where the fraudulent scheme had already reached fruition when the defendant checked out of the motel, subsequent mailings that merely adjusted accounts among victims fell outside the statute because the scheme did not "depend on" them.

The Eighth Circuit applied this principle directly to wire transmissions: a wire used "after" the scheme has come to an end is not within the statute. *United States v. West*, 549 F.2d 545, 556 (8th Cir. 1977), *cert. denied*, 430 U.S. 956 (1977).

Here, the alleged fraudulent act — the eCRIS filing — is complete the instant it arrives at SEEC's Connecticut servers. The Massachusetts backup that then occurs automatically,

according to Ms. Laguex without any act by Mr. Bradley, creates no deception, deceives no one, advances no scheme, and could be eliminated without affecting the government's theory in any respect. Indeed, under *Kann*, *Maze*, and *West*, it falls squarely outside the statute's reach. The government cannot bootstrap an intrastate eCRIS filing into a federal wire fraud charge by pointing to a routine data-backup process that occurred afterward, automatically, and entirely outside Mr. Bradley's knowledge or control.

3. As to August 21, 2018 email (Count 5)

As to the August 21, 2018 email (Count 5): Mr. Gaddis (a *records* custodian) testified that there are no Google servers in Connecticut, but expressly acknowledged that he could not testify that an email from a Connecticut sender to a Connecticut government recipient (SEEC) actually left the State. Further, Mr. Gaddis offered no testimony as to the content, accuracy, or materiality of the email. *See McCoy v. Goldberg*, 748 F. Supp. 146, 154 (S.D.N.Y. 1990) (where parties are in the same state, phone communications are presumed intrastate); *See also Cofacredit, S.A. v. Windsor Plumbing Supply Co.*, 187 F.3d 229, 243 (2d Cir. 1999) (a § 1343 offense "requires that the defendant communicate by wire in 'interstate or foreign commerce'"; a "purely intrastate communication [is] beyond the statute's reach" (other internal quotation marks omitted)).

Accordingly, the government has failed to prove the interstate element on any substantive count. Acquittal on Counts 2 through 6 is required on this independent ground.

B. No Proof of a Scheme to Defraud Through Material Misrepresentations.

Wire fraud requires proof of (1) a scheme or artifice to defraud; (2) by means of false or fraudulent pretenses, representations, or promises; (3) that were material; (4) with fraudulent intent; and (5) use of interstate wires in furtherance of the scheme. 18 U.S.C. § 1343; [United States v. Weaver](#), 860 F.3d 90, 94 (2d Cir. 2017). The government has failed to establish the first four of these elements—indeed, its own witnesses affirmatively dismantled them.

1. Every witness who attended the Dolphin's Cove event described a law-firm party, not a campaign fundraiser.

Every government witness with direct knowledge of the March 15, 2018 event testified consistently with the defense theory:

Barry and Linda Jackson: The Jacksons testified that their company was simply hired to video record a party. They did not know what the party was for, nor did they care, and their testimony bore out as much.

Peter Karayiannis (BDK partner): Mr. Karayiannis was seen in Exhibit 120A (the video) giving a speech at his own firm's client appreciation party, with BDK pictures and advertising being displayed throughout the night and behind him. He testified that he saw no political flyers, political advertisements, or political materials of any kind but knew Dennis was going to announce for the Senate night. He testified he invited a few of the firm's clients to the party. He testified that the Bradley Law Group paid for BDK thank you party, but that was not uncommon – as the Bradley Law Group paid for many things that benefited BDK – including the Puerto Rican Parade that advertised BDK on the float.

Johanna Haddad (BDK attorney and MC): Attorney Haddad, a practicing lawyer of 26 years testified that she was the MC for the night of Dolphin Cove. She was also seen on the video (Exhibit 120A) and she was seen countless times on the video discussing BDK employees, giving thanks to clients and the community for supporting the firm, and talking about each partner before they got up to give their respective speeches. Attorney Haddad also testified that she invited legal colleagues because it was a BDK firm party. Lastly she testified it was too loud for anyone to hear anything about contribution forms.

Jorge Cruz (Bridgeport City Councilman): Testified unequivocally, "I know what a political campaign party looks like and this was not one" referring to the Dolphin Cove party. He testified that he gave \$5 only after being unexpectedly

tapped on the shoulder while eating (by a short woman), and he filled out a form before returning to his meal. His credibility on this point is unimpeachable—he is a sitting elected official with direct experience of political events.

Chinedu Ogbeta: Mr. Ogbeta testified that he was invited to Dolphin Cove as a firm client by partner Karayiannis. His belief that the event might be political was personal speculation. Nobody told him it was a political event. He testified he contributed \$50, and his contribution card was later altered. He was not asked to contribute any money from Dennis Bradley.

The collective weight of this testimony from the government's own witnesses—all of whom had direct knowledge of the event—establishes that the Dolphin's Cove event was understood to be and operated primarily as a law-firm appreciation party. Everyone of them acknowledged the BDK themes and advertisements throughout the TV monitors and decorations. Indeed, no rational jury could find, on this record, that *Mr. Bradley* devised or executed a *scheme* to defraud through material misrepresentations about the event's nature.

2. The government's cooperating witness exonerated Mr. Bradley on the most culpable conduct alleged.

Tina Manus—operating under a cooperation agreement whose sentence reduction benefits depend on the government's assessment of her testimony—admitted on cross-examination: (a) it was *she, not* Mr. Bradley, who changed the contribution form dates, and *she did so alone*, in her car; (b) Mr. Bradley *never told her to change the forms*; (c) Mr. Bradley never instructed her to lie or cover anything up; and (d) Mr. Bradley repeatedly told her "no money, no money" regarding the Dolphin's Cove event.

These admissions from the government's most important witness—made despite maximum pressure to incriminate—eliminate the government's case on fraudulent intent. The alteration of contribution forms, the act the government characterizes as the scheme's most concrete evidence of concealment, was Ms. Manus's *own unilateral* conduct, wholly unauthorized by Mr. Bradley. *See United States v. Gaviria*, 740 F.2d 174, 183 (2d Cir. 1984).

Moreover, Ms. Manus was thoroughly impeached: she admitted to lying to authorities multiple times about every important topic in this case. "Essential to a scheme to defraud is fraudulent intent." *United States v. Autuori*, 212 F.3d 105, 115 (2d Cir. 2000) (quoting *D'Amato*, 39 F.3d at 1257). The government has not proven it.

3. Contemporaneous text messages directly contradict the government's interpretation.

Bieu Tran testified that text messages about a "flyer" were an attempt to hide a campaign event. But this interpretation is directly contradicted by a February 28, 2018 text in the same group message thread—sent by Mr. Tran himself—stating the event was "NOT a fundraiser," and by Tina Manus's own text confirming that "dennis was very clear" about this point. A contemporaneous statement in the government's own evidence flatly refuting its trial interpretation is not sufficient to establish guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

4. The SEEC's own clerk undermined the government's materiality theory.

SEEC Clerk and Election Officer Sheri-Lyn Laguex testified that: (a) Mr. Bradley never hid anything from her and provided all requested information about the Dolphin's Cove event; (b) it was her responsibility to help Mr. Bradley comply with the law, a duty she admitted she fell short of; and (c) Mr. Bradley could have simply amended his filing and nobody would have been in trouble with the law.

A person knowingly perpetrating a fraud on the SEEC does not fully cooperate with the SEEC's own election officer. The SEEC officer's admission that amendment—not prosecution—was the appropriate remedy for any filing deficiency confirms that the alleged omissions lacked the capacity to materially influence SEEC's grant determination. *See Neder v. United States*, 527 U.S. 1, 16 (1999) (materiality requires that misrepresentation "ha[ve] a natural tendency to influence, or [be] capable of influencing, the decision of the decisionmaking body").

C. No Proof of an Unlawful Agreement to Join the Conspiracy (Count 1)

Conspiracy to commit wire fraud under 18 U.S.C. § 1349 requires proof of an unlawful agreement and each defendant's intentional participation in it. *United States v. Geibel*, 369 F.3d 682, 689 (2d Cir. 2004). Conspiracy to commit a particular substantive offense cannot exist without at least the degree of criminal intent necessary for the substantive offense. *Ingram v. United States*, 360 U.S. 672, 678 (1959).

As established above, the government has failed to prove that Mr. Bradley possessed the specific intent to defraud. Without that intent, no conspiracy can stand. The government's only witness who claimed any coordination—Ms. Manus—admitted that Mr. Bradley repeatedly told her "no money" and never instructed her to lie or alter any document. Her testimony, even credited in full, describes an agreement to hold a law-firm party at which she, on her own initiative, took unauthorized action.

The remaining witnesses with knowledge of the party described it as nothing more than a six hour party (which BDK advertising) with six minutes dedicated to Dennis Bradley – the face of BDK – announcing he would run for the state senate. Leonard Grimaldi—a convicted felon who sent threatening texts to Mr. Bradley suggesting he would lie against him at trial—provided no direct evidence of any *conspiratorial* agreement. FBI Agent Wagner's call-log charts contained no message content and proved nothing about any agreement. On this record, no rational jury could find a conspiracy beyond a reasonable doubt.

D. Count Two Fails Independently: The Alleged Text Was Not 'For the Purpose of Executing' Any Scheme

Count Two charges wire fraud based on Mr. Bradley's March 15, 2018 text message telling Tina Manus to bring contribution forms to the event. A wire communication must be used

"for the purpose of executing" the scheme. 18 U.S.C. § 1343; *Schmuck v. United States*, 489 U.S. 705, 710–11 (1989) (wire must be "incident to an essential part of the scheme or a step in the plot"). This text fails that test on three independent grounds.

First, bringing contribution forms to a party is not, in itself, fraudulent or illegal—particularly where Mr. Bradley had simultaneously told Ms. Manus by her own admission in person and through text "*no money, no money.*" The alleged scheme involved the alteration of those forms after the event, an act *Ms. Manus attributed solely to herself*. An instruction to bring paperwork to a party cannot be "for the purpose of executing" a scheme to later falsify that paperwork in a car without instruction.

Second, the text was sent before Mr. Bradley had formally declared his candidacy and before any campaign committee legally existed. It was an internal communication between colleagues—not directed to or received by SEEC, the alleged victim—and thus lacks the nexus to the alleged deception of SEEC. *See United States v. Tum*, 707 F.3d 68, 73 (1st Cir. 2013).

Third, every non-Manus witness who attended the Dolphin's Cove event confirmed it was a BDK firm party in some form or another. If the event was not a campaign fundraiser—as six government witnesses effectively testified—then no instruction to bring contribution forms to it was part of a scheme to defraud anyone.

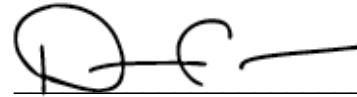
III. CONCLUSION

The government has rested its case without producing constitutionally sufficient evidence on any essential element of any count. Its own witnesses—called by the prosecution—established that: (1) The alleged falsification of contribution forms was carried out *solely* by Tina Manus, on her *own* initiative, without *any* instruction from Mr. Bradley; (2) Mr. Bradley repeatedly said "no money, no money" regarding the Dolphin's Cove event; (3) Mr.

Bradley never hid anything from the SEEC and cooperated fully with its election officer; (4) Every attendee who testified described that the Dolphin Cove event was at least in part a law-firm appreciation party; (5) No technical evidence establishes that any of the five alleged wire communications crossed state lines; and (6) Amendment—not prosecution—was the appropriate remedy for any filing omission, demonstrating that the alleged misrepresentations lacked materiality.

This is precisely the rare case where the government's failure is clear. *United States v. Guadagna*, 183 F.3d at 130. Accordingly, Mr. Bradley respectfully requests that this Court enter a judgment of acquittal on all counts of the Superseding Indictment pursuant to Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 29.

Respectfully submitted by:



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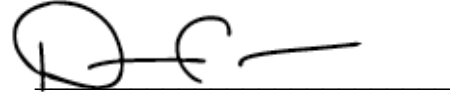
Dated: March 24, 2026

DEFENDANT's COUNSEL

CERTIFICATION

I HEREBY CERTIFY that on March 24, 2026, a copy of the foregoing motion was filed electronically and served by mail on anyone unable to accept electronic filing. Notice of this filing will be sent to all parties by operation of the Court's electronic filing system or by mail to anyone unable to accept electronic filing as indicated on the Notice of Electronic Filing. Parties may access this filing through the Court's CM/ECF System.

Respectfully submitted by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Crosland', written over a horizontal line.

Darnell D. Crosland, Esq.

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