

Mystery parent paid \$6.5 million to get kids into top universities as part of admissions scandal**Richard Winton. Los Angeles Times, 27 March 2019**

Of the many outrageous allegations revealed by federal prosecutors in the college cheating scandal, one stands out. Someone paid \$6.5 million to get his or her children into elite schools. But the identity of that parent — and details about which schools were involved — remains a mystery nearly two weeks after authorities in Boston filed the charges against dozens of wealthy individuals.

The lack of information about the money is more notable given that the charges go into intense detail about the alleged actions of other parents, who are accused of bribing and cheating to get their kids into schools such as Yale, USC and UCLA. [...]

It remains unclear how many parents took part in the college admissions scam. Court documents said college fixer William “Rick” Singer had more than 700 clients. The case accuses Singer, a slew of university coaches and more than 30 parents, including actresses Lori Loughlin and Felicity Huffman. It centers on a Newport Beach college placement firm run by Singer. Wealthy parents are accused of paying Singer to help their children cheat on college entrance exams and to falsify athletic records of students to enable them to secure admission to elite schools, including UCLA, USC, Stanford, Yale and Georgetown, court records show. [...]

The family of a person identified as only “Yale Applicant One” paid Singer \$1.2 million, including \$900,000 into his charitable organization. Singer, according to the documents, was introduced to the applicant’s family in November 2017 by a financial advisor. The girl’s father told Singer he wanted to make a “donation” for his daughter’s application. Singer sent the girl’s admissions application to Yale women’s soccer coach Rudy Meredith, along with her art portfolio, and told Meredith he would change the materials from art to soccer. On Nov. 17, Singer sent the coach a fabricated athletic profile for the student, making her the co-captain of an elite Southern California soccer club. Singer then got Laura Janke, a former assistant coach at USC, to create the phony credentials, according to documents. “Need a soccer pic probably Asian girl,” prosecutors say Singer wrote in the email. “Jr National Development team in China ... we saying she got hurt this spring so was not recruited til now.”

At the start of the new year, Singer sent Meredith, who had coached the Yale soccer team for more than two decades, a check for \$400,000, drawn on the Key Worldwide Foundation charity account.

It was Meredith’s actions that led to the scam’s unraveling. Prosecutors say he solicited \$450,000 from another parent, who had previously been charged with securities fraud and promptly gave up the coach’s offer, eventually wearing a concealed microphone during a payoff meeting with Meredith in April 2018. The coach ultimately told federal prosecutors of his deal with Singer.

Usually, fraud refers to a scheme to obtain money from someone through a false promise. But in 1988, Congress expanded the anti-fraud law. A one-line amendment made it a crime to deprive someone of the “intangible right of honest services.” In the college cheating scandal, prosecutors are alleging that parents deprived universities of their property — a slot in the school — by deception.

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