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Jail, fine for 2 men linked to cheating scam involving over \$10 million



Renovation firm manager Tan Aik Gee (right) and one of his accomplices, freelance contractor Wong Weng Kong (left), were jailed and fined over a scam that defrauded a company of more than \$10 million. ST PHOTOS: WONG KWAI CHOW



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SINGAPORE - One of two masterminds of a scam involving false quotations and fictitious job requests obtained more than \$4.2 million in the ruse that defrauded a company of more than \$10 million.

On Monday (Nov 12), renovation firm manager Tan Aik Gee, 54, from Ying Xin Services was sentenced to 11 years' jail and a fine of \$900,000 after pleading guilty to 25 charges of cheating construction services company United Engineers Limited (UEL) and five counts of taking his ill-gotten gains from Singapore to Indonesia.

The court heard that 186 other charges were considered during sentencing and he will spend an additional 30 months behind bars if he is unable to pay the fine.

Tan and Linda Lee, who was then working for UE ServiceCorp Singapore - a subsidiary of UEL - came up with the plan in 2009.

One of their accomplices, freelance contractor Wong Weng Kong, who was roped in two years later, benefited more than \$560,000 from the scam, the court heard.

District Judge Lim Tse Haw on Monday sentenced Wong, 60, to six years and three months' jail and a fine of \$210,000. If he is unable to pay the fine, he will be jailed for another seven months.

Wong admitted to seven cheating charges and three counts of dealing with the benefits of his crimes. Forty other charges were taken into consideration.



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Lee, then 39, a former asset management vice-president for UE ServiceCorp Singapore, was sentenced last year to 14 years' jail for her role in the ruse. It was reduced to 12½ years last month following an appeal.

Deputy Public Prosecutor Jasmin Kaur said that as part of the scheme, Tan gave Lee letterheads of various contractors to prepare false quotations.

These would then be submitted for fictitious job requests.

Once the jobs were approved, he would get 50 per cent of the money paid out by UEL.

Wong took part in the ruse in 2011. The trio agreed that he would set up firms that could be "awarded" fictitious projects by UEL.

Wong's daughter set up a firm called TW Construction Engineering and its letterheads were used to create false quotations.

As part of the ruse, Wong set up five more firms in 2013 and 2014 under the names of his wife and daughter.

For jobs that were awarded to these companies, he would receive 10 per cent of the invoice amounts.

Lee later roped in two more people, Ng Shu Jun, 30, and Tan Kiam Boon, to take part in the scam.

Ng's case is still pending while Tan Kiam Boon was sentenced to three months' jail in September this year.

Court documents did not state how the offences came to light.

In mitigation, Tan Aik Gee's lawyers, Mr Josephus Tan and Mr Cory Wong from Invictus Law, urged the court to sentence their client to not more than 10 years' jail, stressing that Lee was the "prime mover" in the case.

Wong Weng Kong was represented by lawyers **Patrick Fernandez** and Cheryl Tan, who pleaded for the "lowest possible custodial sentence". The team from Fernandez law firm stated in its plea that Wong was a "pawn" in the ruse.

Tan Aik Gee is now out on bail of \$150,000, while Wong Weng Kong's bail was set at \$75,000.

They were ordered to surrender themselves at the State Courts on Nov 23 to begin serving their sentences.

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