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Miami husband, father, fake crypto bro 'Brody' pulled a \$988,000 stock and crypto fraud

BY DAVID J. NEAL

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BY NEWSY / VIDEO ELEPHANT

Cryptocurrency has always been a currency of choice for cybercriminals when demanding ransomware payments from companies, But it's also quickly becoming the payment method of choice for scammers targeting everyday citizens.

Miami's Ryan Crawford told potential stock and cryptocurrency investors via WhatsApp that he had an AI trading bot that "never lost." Crawford "guaranteed" return of the invested money.

Despite the investing red flags in the two sentences above, over two years people sent \$988,895 in cash and crypto to Crawford, aka "Brody," that he invested in his own good time, 'including spending victim funds on luxury car rentals and gambling at casinos.'

All of the above comes from Crawford's guilty plea to three counts of wire fraud for which he was sentenced in Miami federal court Wednesday to five years, six months in federal prison and a cash forfeiture of \$988,895

[READ MORE: Miami stock-cryptoscam took in \\$800,000, fed says. It was spent on luxury cars, gambling](#)

Crawford, 30, ran his scam from June 2020 through March 2022. While Crawford paid rent on luxury cars, he didn't bother to pay the \$6,000 monthly rent on the Brickell Key apartment in which he, his wife and child lived.

A Miami-Dade County lawsuit by the owner of Two Tequesta Point unit No. 2204 said after the original one-year lease ran out in November 2020, Crawford and his wife stayed in the apartment until August 2021 without paying rent. The court entered a judgment of \$56,635.

Crawford's wife filed for divorce in October 2022

'I AM LITERALLY A LICENSED STOCK BROKER'

In 2020, state records say Crawford created Primordial Investors Limited Liability Company, Primordial Investment Group, Primordial Capital and Kairos Solar Processing. He also started WhatsApp chat groups with the stated goal of helping people trade crypto and stocks.

The groups really existed to bring targets to Crawford, his admission of facts says. He'd directly message people in the chat about his investment proposals, telling them of his trading prowess, his deep financial backing and the infallible AI bot. Plus, he promised them, at worst, he'd make sure investors got their investment back.

Crawford maintained that dishonesty with his assuaging lie to victim A.M. via WhatsApp: "I am, literally, a licensed stock broker."

(If you need to [check a broker's status](#), you can swing by the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority's BrokerCheck and enter a name).

He messaged A.M. that eight days after luring him in by telling him on WhatsApp that he was "Makin millions" and "I can double any amount u give me in 1 week" and "I've made 37 million since the crash in March."

Crawford also sent a screen shot from the WeBull stock trading app, showing gains of \$25.65 million. A.M. asked whose account that showed and Crawford said "Mine..."

Crawford's accounts, his guilty plea admits, had been closed for over two months for suspected fraud.

A.M. agreed to let Ryan Brody Crawford trade stocks for a 5% commission and wired Crawford \$100,000 on Sept. 28, 2020. Crawford was supposed to send A.M. \$100,000 back by Oct. 15, 2020.

"Bank records further revealed that, instead of investing A.M.'s money in stocks, [Crawford] misappropriated and dissipated approximately \$80,000 of A.M.'s money within one week, spending the money primarily on personal

This case was investigated by Miami-Dade police's Cyber Crimes Investigative Unit, the U.S. Secret Service, FBI Miami with help from the Florida Office of Financial Regulation. Assistant U.S. Attorney Stephanie Hauser handled the prosecution and Emily Stone and Mitch Hyman did the asset forfeiture.

expenses, on luxury car rentals, and at a local casino,” the guilty plea admits. “By Oct. 6, 2020, [Crawford’s] bank account, ending in –6201, was over drafted with a negative balance.”

Instead of sending back the \$100,000 by Oct. 15, 2020, Crawford told A.M. on Oct. 16, 2020, that he was sending him \$200,000 and sent three screenshots of a check from financial services company Robinhood.

“According to Robinhood records, for each of the three screenshots of purported \$200,000 checks, [Crawford] had initiated — and then canceled — checks for \$2,000 (not \$200,000) to create the false appearance that repayment was pending and forthcoming,” the admission of facts states

Crawford never sent A.M. his money.

‘BRO, HOW DO I KNOW 100% THIS DEAL IS LEGIT?’

Crawford’s admission of facts says on Oct. 13, 2021, when D.G. joined a WhatsApp chat group for investments involving cryptocurrency Ethereum, Crawford proposed “every 1 eth u send u get 100k in return 3 days later per ethereum.”

D.G. asked Crawford, “Bro, how do I know 100% this deal is legit? \$400k is a lot of money.”

So, Crawford sent a screenshot of a WeBull account that showed Crawford making \$18.9 million from his brilliant dealing.

“WeBull records, however, revealed that the screenshot of [Crawford’s] purported stock trading successes was actually from WeBull’s paper trading function, that is, simulated trading of stocks that does not involve actual money.

“In other words, they were fake.”

But, they were enough to get D.G. to send Crawford \$71,845 of Ethereum for an expected return of \$7.5 million. Over the next two days, D.G. sent Crawford \$170,475 worth of Ethereum. Come time for repayment, Crawford sent fake screenshots of wires that were never sent.

D.G.’s money was gone.



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Since 1989, David J. Neal's domain at the Miami Herald has expanded to include writing about Panthers (NHL and FIU), Dolphins, old school animation, food safety, fraud, naughty lawyers, bad doctors and all manner of breaking news. He drinks coladas whole. He does not work Indianapolis 500 Race Day.