CLIENT ALERTS & INSIGHTS

From the NBA Finals to Federal Prison - “Big Baby” Sentenced to 40 months in NBA Healthcare Plan Scheme

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Former NBA player Glen “Big Baby” Davis was sentenced to 40 months in prison after being convicted for his role in a scheme to defraud the NBA healthcare plan. Davis’ sentence comes almost a year after the scheme’s ringleader, former New Jersey Nets player Terrance Williams, was sentenced to 10 years in prison for the over $5 million fraud.[1] Davis is widely known for his role on the 2008 Boston Celtics championship team.

Manhattan U.S. District Court Judge Valerie E. Caproni admonished Davis at his May 9, 2024, sentencing hearing stating that his behavior was more serious than many of the 19 former players charged in the case. Davis not only submitted invoices for medical services he did not receive, but also furthered the scheme by recruiting Atlanta-area chiropractor Rashad Sanford to resubmit previously denied false invoices provided by Williams. Together, Davis and Sanford received a $44,000 payout from the plan.[2] Sanford was sentenced to six months in prison for his role.

Beyond working with Sanford, Davis also submitted an invoice requesting a $27,200 reimbursement for 15 root canals conducted by Los Angeles-area dentist Aamir Wahab.[3] Investigators later discovered that, based on Davis’ cell phone geolocation, Davis was not actually in Los Angeles on the day these 15 root canals supposedly took place. Wahab pled guilty and was sentenced to three years in prison. Overall, Davis was convicted of submitting a total of $132,000 worth of fabricated medical claims.

Davis’ attorney, Sabrina Shroff, implored the Court to consider Davis’ mitigating circumstances, including growing up with a drug-addicted mother and experiencing severe neglect as a child. Davis tearfully addressed the Court prior to receiving his sentence and apologized for being before the judge. Attorney Shroff also discussed Davis’ tumultuous adjustment to life without basketball following a career-ending injury. Davis admitted to struggling financially due to poor money management since leaving the league. But Judge Caproni was unmoved. She responded, “You always had very dramatic facial reactions, I can see why you have a [Screen Actors Guild] card.”[4]

Judge Caproni also ordered Davis to serve three years of supervised release, pay $80,000 in restitution jointly with Sanford, participate in financial management classes, and participate in mandatory drug treatment. Davis’ conviction for wire fraud, healthcare fraud, healthcare fraud conspiracy, and conspiracy to make false statements related to healthcare matters yielded sentencing guidelines within the range of 37 to 46 months. In determining her sentence, the judge highlighted Davis’ lack of compliance with pre-trial services, including traveling out of state without

contacting the probation department, providing incomplete financial disclosures, and testing positive for marijuana numerous times.[5] Davis mocked Judge Caproni during the hearing as he applauded the sentence, commented “good job” to the judge’s staff while exiting the courtroom, and took to Instagram Live commenting about his prison fitness plan, “[T]hat’s what God say, I’m going to stop you eating hamburgers imma put you in jail. You don’t wanna stop eating hamburgers and Cheetos? You’re going to jail. So now, imma become The Rock.”[6]

Several former players wrote letters asking for leniency on Davis’ behalf, including National Basketball Players’ Association (NBPA) Executive Director Andre Iguodala and former Celtics teammate Evan Turner.[7] Davis and former Detroit Pistons guard Will Bynum were the only two players not to plead guilty. Bynum is currently appealing his conviction.[8]

Davis’ and his co-defendants’ sentences highlight the broad range of healthcare fraud cases the government is willing to pursue. While the government has particular incentive to investigate and punish large frauds against public payors like Medicare, it remains vigilant to relatively smaller frauds against private payors. These sentences further highlight the government’s willingness to pursue not just ringleaders but low-level participants as well.

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[1] Southern District of New York | Former NBA Player Terrence Williams Sentenced To 10 Years In Prison For Defrauding The NBA Players’ Health And Welfare Benefit Plan | United States Department of Justice.

[2] Ex-Celtic 'Big Baby' Gets 40 Mos. In Health Fraud Case - Law360

[3] Glen ‘Big Baby’ Davis sentenced to 40 months in prison over NBA healthcare fraud scheme - CelticsBlog

[4] Ex-Celtic 'Big Baby' Gets 40 Mos. In Health Fraud Case - Law360

[5] *Id.*

[6] Ex-NBA player Glen Davis says jail will stop him from eating burgers (usatoday.com)

[7] Glen ‘Big Baby’ Davis sentenced to 40 months in prison over NBA healthcare fraud scheme - CelticsBlog

[8] Ex-Celtic 'Big Baby' Gets 40 Mos. In Health Fraud Case - Law360