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Robert Brockman, the Houston billionaire and CEO of a software company, has been charged with taking \$2 billion through a scheme to evade taxes, hide assets, and launder money, in what federal prosecutors say is the biggest case of its kind.

Brockman, 79, was charged in a 39-count indictment that includes charges of money laundering, conspiracy, wire fraud, and tax evasion. The 42-page indictment, unsealed Thursday morning, alleges that in the late 1990s, Brockman formed

companies on the British Virgin Islands and later used them to conceal assets from

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not detail what sparked the investigation. Smith avoided criminal charges by agreeing to help with Brockman's prosecution.

Among the explosive allegations in the indictment is a reference to an infamous 2013 incident when he arranged to donate \$250 million to Centre College in Danville, Kentucky, which Brockman offered then inexplicably pulled weeks later. He facilitated the donation, along with related demands, through an uncharged co-conspirator in the case, the complaint alleges.

Prosecutors say he used code words on encrypted emails as part of an elaborate scheme to hide assets overseas. His code name was "Permit," for instance, while others used nom de plumes like "Redfish," "King," "Bonefish," "Snapper," or "Steelhead."

"Complexity will not hide crime from law enforcement," U.S. Attorney Dave Anderson said at a Thursday news conference announcing the charges. "We will not hesitate to prosecute the smartest guys in the room."

Brockman is alleged to have conspired with a person described only as Individual 1, who was put in charge of St. John's Trust Company, described as a Bermudian entity owned by Brockman but designed to have no ties to him. Though Individual 1 is not named, he appears to be Evatt Tamine, an Australian attorney who served as director of St. John's until September 2018, when his home was raided by IRS agents, according to published reports.

Brockman is also accused of taking steps to cover his tracks, for instance by directing Individual 1 to use a "Evidence Eliminator" on Individual 1's computer, the indictment says.

In 2013, Brockman allegedly talked with Individual 1 through encrypted emails, directing the person to threaten to "pull the plug" on his Centre College donation if

his demands weren't met. A week later, he cancelled the donation and told

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agreed to cooperate with federal prosecutors against Brockman. Smith will not be charged with a crime in exchange for his assistance, Anderson said.

Smith has agreed to pay \$139 million in owed taxes and penalties, and admitted a violation of federal law. Smith used his ill-gotten gains for ski properties in the French alps, a vacation home in Sonoma, but also for charitable causes, like a Colorado charity for wounded veterans and impoverished youth, prosecutors said.

“Although Smith willfully and knowingly violated the law, Smith has accepted responsibility and agreed to provide complete and truthful cooperation,” Anderson said.

Brockman's net worth is estimated at more than \$1 billion. He made much of his fortune selling software to automotive company, and is the CEO of the auto software company Reynolds and Reynolds.

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