

## UK solar fraudster escapes jail over use of alias in SFO case

13 Feb 2024 | 13:18 GMT | **Insight**

By [Abhishek Kumar](#) and [Martin Coyle](#)

David Black, a fraudster who was previously jailed for scamming 1,500 solar-panel investors out of 17 million pounds (\$21 million) escaped a return to jail today, in spite of using an alias in breach of a UK court order.

A fraudster who was previously jailed for scamming 1,500 solar-panel investors out of 17 million pounds (\$21 million) escaped a return to jail today, in spite of using an alias in breach of a UK court order.

David Black was convicted at Westminster Magistrates Court in London in December as part of a Serious Fraud Office prosecution into his use of a different name in business dealings. This was in breach of a condition imposed on him following his release from prison.

The SFO became aware that he was using an alias in October 2022, after he used different e-mail addresses to communicate with the prosecutor. Black admitted the offense in an SFO interview.

In a hearing at Southwark Crown Court today, judge David Lock handed him a 16-month prison sentence, suspended for two years, meaning he will only be jailed if he offends again in the next couple of years. He was also ordered to pay 64,000 pounds in damages.

Lock said Black had been "clearly motivated" to present a "different identity to the world" to hide his past offending. "It offers no excuse for violating the court order, although the reason may have been benign," the judge said.

Simon Gurney, a lawyer acting for Black, told the court that he hadn't been involved in any "substantial offending" since July 2019, and that he should have his sentence suspended and not be imprisoned.

Black had a Serious Crime Prevention Order imposed on him in January 2021 to monitor his activities following his release from prison. One of its terms prohibited Black from changing his name, after he'd previously been known as David Diaz, and briefly as David Stark.

In 2018, Black (then known as Diaz) was among six men convicted for scamming 1,500 elderly people out of more than 10,000 pounds each. The group sold solar panels through Manchester-based Solar Energy Savings Ltd., making false promises that their victims' money would be invested and returned to them in full in five years' time.

Please email [editors@mlex.com](mailto:editors@mlex.com) to contact the editorial staff regarding this story, or to submit the names of lawyers and advisers.

**Areas of Interest:** Financial Crime

**Industries:** Energy & Utilities

**Geographies:** Europe, Northern Europe, United Kingdom