

● **BREAKING** WATCH LIVE: JOE BIDEN GIVES  
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# Ex-pro football player to plead guilty in college admissions scam; prosecutors seeking 90-day prison term

By [Travis Andersen](#) Globe Staff, Updated March 11, 2020, 12:24 p.m.



David Sidoo, a Canadian businessman, will plead guilty Friday in US District Court in Boston to one count of conspiracy to commit wire and mail fraud. JONATHAN WIGGS/GLOBE STAFF/FILE

A Vancouver businessman and former Canadian Football League player has entered into an agreement to plead guilty to his alleged role in the college admissions cheating

scandal, and federal prosecutors will recommend a 90-day prison sentence, according to legal filings.

[David Sidoo](#), 60, will plead guilty Friday in US District Court in Boston to one count of conspiracy to commit wire and mail fraud, a charge that carries a maximum prison term of 20 years, according to his plea deal filed Wednesday. Prosecutors said they'll recommend that he serve 90 days in prison and pay a \$250,000 fine, among other conditions.

Martin G. Weinberg, a Boston attorney representing Sidoo, said in a statement that the "centerpiece of the plea agreement is a joint sentencing proposal by the government and defense for a 90 day sentence of imprisonment and a fine on a single charge of wire fraud conspiracy which, if accepted by Judge [Nathaniel M.] Gorton, will result in the dismissal of the pending money laundering charge."

An indictment filed in the case said Sidoo paid \$200,000 to have someone take the SAT exam for his two sons.

Sidoo's one of more than 50 people charged in connection with the scam, in which wealthy parents paid admitted ringleader William "Rick" Singer to have their children falsely classified as athletic recruits at elite colleges, effectively paving their way to admission, or to facilitate cheating on the kids' SAT and ACT exams when the scores needed buffing.

Prosecutors say Singer, who's admitted to his starring role in the ruse and awaits sentencing, directed some payments to corrupt college coaches, employees, and test proctors in on the con.

According to the indictment, Sidoo paid Singer \$100,000 in 2011 to have one of Singer's associates, Mark Riddell, take the SAT for his older son. Riddell [has pleaded guilty to related charges](#) and faces sentencing in October.

Singer told Riddell not to obtain too high a score for Sidoo's older son, since the son had previously taken the test on his own and obtained a mark of 1460 out of a possible 2400, the indictment said. Riddell, posing as the older son, ultimately obtained a score of 1670, according to court records.

In January 2013, the indictment said, Sidoo paid another \$100,000 after Riddell took the SAT on behalf of his younger son, for whom Riddell obtained a score of 2280 out of a possible 2400. Singer had instructed Riddell to obtain a high score for the younger son, who hadn't previously taken the SAT, records show.

In addition, the indictment said, Singer drafted a falsified college application essay for Sidoo's younger son in October 2013. The essay described the younger son's "purported internship" with a group that worked to combat violence among Los Angeles-area gangs and said the son had been held up at gunpoint by gang members, the filing said.

Sidoo was a little squeamish on that point, writing to Singer in an e-mail, "[C]an we lessen the interaction with the gangs?" the indictment said. "Guns ... ? [T]hat's scary stuff. Your call you know what they look for." The essay was later submitted to multiple schools without the gritty gun reference, according to legal filings.

On Wednesday, Weinberg added that Sidoo's "desire is to seek finality to this process. Judge Gorton has cautioned both the government and defense to not be issuing media statements as the case proceeds to a jury trial for other defendants therefore neither Mr. Sidoo nor his legal counsel will be making any further statement."

*Laura Krantz of the Globe Staff contributed to this report.*

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