

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MARYLAND

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

*

v.

*

CRIMINAL NO. LKG-25-6

*

THOMAS C. GOLDSTEIN,

*

Defendant

*

*

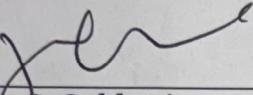
JOINT STIPULATION OF FACT

In 2025, Mr. Goldstein had a series of conversations with someone he has known since at least 2000, during which he gave the following quotes or made the following statements in substance, which Mr. Goldstein believed to be true:

1. In the early 2000s, ESPN began broadcasting poker, a game Mr. Goldstein had never played. Mr. Goldstein said “I loved watching [...] I think of it as a pretty intellectual thing. Actually, I like it because what poker is, fundamentally, is management of luck and management of risk.” Mr. Goldstein quickly graduated from games around the kitchen table with jars of quarters to tables of high rollers in Washington and New York. Mr. Goldstein said “I would play in home games where you could win and lose \$100,000.”
2. Mr. Goldstein’s style of play reflected his swaggering, risk-friendly approach to litigation. Mr. Goldstein said, “Very often lawyers, or people in general, want to make every conceivable argument, and you get in the situation where, by making every point, you essentially make no points. I’m a big believer that you have to figure out what your winning argument is. It is a poker thing, and that is being willing to say: This is not working. And if I just sit here and hedge my bets and argue both, I’m not going to accomplish anything.”
3. That Mr. Goldstein had law clients in the poker world helped him explain to his wife his increasingly long absences from Washington. (He also represented the website Poker Stars, which was headquartered on the Isle of Man.)
4. Mr. Goldstein quickly realized that even with his successful law practice, he didn’t have the cash to compete. Mr. Goldstein said, “The idea was to be able to play very, very, very deep and not be out of money.” Mr. Goldstein took out a \$10 million line of credit from Stewart Resnick, a California billionaire who owns the parent company of Pom juice, a former client of Goldstein’s.

5. After getting the loan from Resnick, Mr. Goldstein promptly lost \$9 million playing ring games. Mr. Goldstein said, “Playing ring poker against a bunch of people requires enormous discipline, enormous patience, and those are just not things in poker that I have. If you’re playing against eight people, just mathematically, the odds that somebody has a hand that’s better than yours are quite high. If you’re playing against one person, you don’t have to be nearly as patient. What’s rewarded is being very aggressive. So heads-up, in essence, is built for me.” Mr. Goldstein started taking on investors in his heads-up contests, who would share in his wins and losses.
6. In heads-up games, most of Mr. Goldstein’s opponents were billionaires with an expensive hobby. With just three men in the room, the games didn’t feature a lot of conversation. Mr. Goldstein said, “You can imagine people who are just super, super focused. They’re not chatting. There’s me, there’s the dealer, there’s them and, you know, somewhere between two and 20 hours of pretty stone silence, except for the bets.” In Manila, Goldstein played poker with a gambler known as Tango and won \$13.4 million. He also won \$9.96 million from a gambler known as Chairman. From 2016 to 2018, Goldstein was out of the country for almost a full year.
7. At the end of 2016, Mr. Goldstein played a California businessman named Alec Gores in Beverly Hills and won \$26.435 million — the biggest score of his life. (Earlier that year, Mr. Goldstein also won \$200,000 in a game that included the actor Kevin Hart.) During this run Mr. Goldstein won a total of about \$50 million, and even though he had sold roughly 75 percent of his stakes to investors, Mr. Goldstein still personally cleared about \$12 million. Flush with his success against Gores, Mr. Goldstein sat down to a heads-up match with a real estate magnate named Bob Safai — and this time he didn’t spread the risk by taking on backers. Mr. Goldstein said, “I just have convinced myself, because I won \$50 million in heads-up poker, that I am a savant at heads-up poker.” Mr. Goldstein promptly lost \$14 million to Safai, all out of his own pocket.
8. Mr. Goldstein was asked how he could stand the stress of playing for such gargantuan stakes. Mr. Goldstein said, “I have both the benefit and the great disadvantage of not placing particular value on the money. So that means that I can play at very large stakes and not get psyched out about it, but it also means that I will take too many risks with too much money. So it’s a blessing and a curse. It does not bother me. It doesn’t cause my heart rate to go up. I mean, I can think of \$26 million like \$26,000, really, genuinely.”
9. Mr. Goldstein told this person that the main reason he ultimately abandoned the law was because he was finally playing heads-up games against the Southern businessman. “I was beating him, [a]nd that was just a way more interesting life.” Mr. Goldstein won roughly \$50 million from the Southerner, netting \$15 million for himself after paying off his investors.

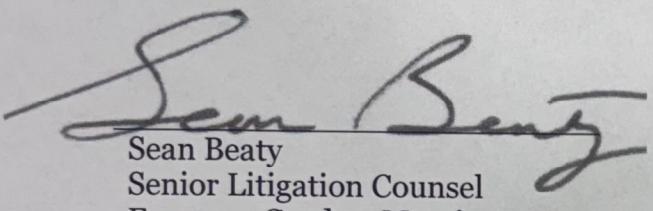
10. Mr. Goldstein discussed the applications that he and Howe filled out for mortgages. In those bank forms, Mr. Goldstein understated his debts, especially the multiple millions of dollars that he still owed to Resnick for his line of credit. Mr. Goldstein told the person that he omitted that information because he wanted to keep that debt secret from Howe, as he had kept her in the dark about most of his poker activity.



Thomas C. Goldstein

2-4-26

Date



Sean Beatty
Senior Litigation Counsel
Emerson Gordon-Marvin
Hayter Whitman
Trial Attorneys
Criminal Division

February 4, 2026

Date

Adeyemi Adenrele
Assistant United States Attorney
District of Maryland