

Diploma faker loses his freedom – and his yacht

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An elderly man in California who made up a university, then raked in millions selling diplomas from it has been sentenced to eight months in jail.

Ronald Pellar, 75, will also have to forfeit his luxury yacht, worth \$1.5 million US, because the court ruled he bought it with the proceeds of crime.

Pellar invented "Columbia State University" in Louisiana, no relation to the very real Columbia University in New York.

He then marketed bachelor's, master's and doctorate degrees that could be acquired by correspondence in as little as one month for between \$1,500 and \$3,000 US.

U.S. District Judge Alicemarie Stotler sentenced Pellar on Monday on nine counts of mail fraud.

Assistant U.S. attorney Donald Gaffney said most of the people who bought the diplomas weren't really victims of Pellar's crime because they wanted the degrees to mislead employers into thinking they were better educated.

Pellar will also have to pay about \$45,000 US in restitution.