

Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

District of Massachusetts

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, December 14, 2021

Reading Man Pleads Guilty to Wire Fraud and Identity Theft Charges

BOSTON – A Reading man pleaded guilty in federal court in Boston today in connection with a scheme to defraud an elderly relative of her interest in a three-family home and a separate scheme to defraud the Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance.

Giorgio “George” Fiorenza, 51, pleaded guilty to two counts of wire fraud and one count of aggravated identity theft. U.S. District Court Judge Leo T. Sorokin scheduled sentencing for April 7, 2022. Fiorenza was charged in August 2020.

Between August and September 2017, Fiorenza defrauded an elderly relative into unknowingly signing a deed conveying her interest in a property she owned with Fiorenza’s spouse and forged the victim’s name on another document necessary to convey title to the property, both of which were recorded in the Middlesex Registry of Deeds. Fiorenza then took out a \$750,000 loan in his spouse’s name and secured by the property, and subsequently caused the lender to foreclose on the property.

Between April and June 2020, Fiorenza filed claims for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) in the names of third parties and fraudulently diverted some of the funds for his own use. PUA was a temporary federal unemployment insurance program created when Congress passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) in March 2020 in response to the global coronavirus pandemic. The PUA program, which in Massachusetts was administered by the Department of Unemployment Assistance, provided unemployment insurance benefits for individuals who were not eligible for other types of unemployment benefits. Among other things, Fiorenza filed a PUA claim using a victim’s identity, directed the proceeds of the claim to an account in his spouse’s name, and did not disclose to the victim or her husband that she had qualified for assistance.

The charge of wire fraud provides a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000 or twice the gross gain or loss, whichever is greater. The charge of aggravated identity theft provides a mandatory sentence of two years in prison, one year of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000 or twice the gross gain or loss, whichever is greater. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

Acting United States Attorney Nathaniel R. Mendell, Joseph R. Bonavolonta, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Division and Jonathan Mellone, Special Agent in Charge of Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, Labor Racketeering and Fraud Investigations made the announcement. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Kristen A. Kearney and David M. Holcomb of Mendell’s Securities, Financial & Cyber Fraud Unit are prosecuting the case.

On May 17, 2021, the Attorney General established the COVID-19 Fraud Enforcement Task Force to marshal the resources of the Department of Justice in partnership with agencies across government

to enhance efforts to combat and prevent pandemic-related fraud. The Task Force bolsters efforts to investigate and prosecute the most culpable domestic and international criminal actors and assists agencies tasked with administering relief programs to prevent fraud by, among other methods, augmenting and incorporating existing coordination mechanisms, identifying resources and techniques to uncover fraudulent actors and their schemes, and sharing and harnessing information and insights gained from prior enforcement efforts. For more information on the Department's response to the pandemic, please visit <https://www.justice.gov/coronavirus>.

Anyone with information about allegations of attempted fraud involving COVID-19 can report it by calling the Department of Justice's National Center for Disaster Fraud (NCDF) Hotline at 866-720-5721 or via the NCDF Web Complaint Form at: <https://www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form>.

Topic(s):

Coronavirus
Financial Fraud
Identity Theft

Component(s):

[USAO - Massachusetts](#)

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