

Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Central District of California

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, December 12, 2022

Former Mail Carrier and Co-Schemer Who Lived on His Mail Delivery Route Each Sentenced to Nearly 3½ Years in Prison for COVID Fraud

LOS ANGELES – A former United States Postal Service mail carrier was sentenced today to 41 months in federal prison for scheming to steal more than \$250,000 in unemployment insurance (UI) funds by making false claims of COVID-related job losses and for stealing UI debit cards intended for other people on his mail route.

Stephen Glover, 33, of Palmdale, was sentenced by United States District Judge Percy Anderson, who also ordered him to pay \$151,698 in restitution.

Glover pleaded guilty on July 11 to one count of mail fraud and one count of theft of mail matter by an officer or employee.

Judge Anderson today also sentenced Glover's co-schemer, Travis McKenzie, 26, of Valencia, to 41 months in federal prison and ordered him to pay \$448,228 in restitution. McKenzie, who lived on Glover's mail route, pleaded guilty on July 13 to a three-count information charging him with mail fraud, mail theft and identity theft.

From August 2020 to June 2021, while he was employed at the United States Post Office in Valencia, Glover schemed to defraud the California Employment Development Department (EDD) out of hundreds of thousands of dollars in COVID-19 -related unemployment benefits. Glover's co-schemers applied for unemployment benefits using false statements and sometimes using stolen identities. Based upon the fraudulent claims, EDD mailed out debit cards to addresses listed on the applications.

The fraudulent UI claims were federally funded through programs authorized by Congress in response to the pandemic, including the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance and Lost Wage Assistance programs.

Glover abused his position as a mail carrier by providing co-schemers with addresses on his mail route, which his co-schemers then used as mailing addresses on the fraudulent EDD applications. After EDD mailed debit cards to those addresses, Glover intercepted and stole that mail.

Glover also stole legitimate EDD debit cards intended for recipients on his mail route. Glover used the EDD debit cards in other people's names to withdraw thousands of dollars in cash from ATMs. He also activated the debit cards in other people's names by calling EDD and using PINs he had discovered from stolen EDD mail. During a search of his girlfriend's residence in June 2021, law enforcement found 37 pieces of mail from EDD address to 15 different individuals.

The total intended loss related to Glover's mail fraud scheme is \$270,698.

McKenzie admitted in his plea agreement that law enforcement found more than 150 pieces of mail from EDD addressed to more than 50 different names, as well as mail from the Virginia

Employment Commission, at his residence. McKenzie used cash withdrawn from ATMs using EDD debit cards to purchase items from luxury retailers including Louis Vuitton and Prada handbags from luxury retailers Nieman Marcus and Saks Fifth Avenue.

The intended loss applicable to McKenzie's participation in the mail fraud scheme is approximately \$577,522. McKenzie further admitted to possessing 317 pieces of stolen mail.

The United States Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General; the United States Postal Service, Office of Inspector General; the California Employment Development Department, Investigation Division; and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department investigated this matter.

Assistant United States Attorney Charles E. Pell of the Santa Ana Branch Office prosecuted these cases.

Anyone with information about allegations of fraud involving COVID-19 can report it by calling the Department of Justice's National Center for Disaster Fraud 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

Component(s):
[USAO - California, Central](#)

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Press Release Number:
22-263

Updated December 12, 2022