

Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Southern District of Ohio

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, January 10, 2023

Former insurance agent pleads guilty to defrauding customers by creating life insurance policies in their names without victims' knowledge

CINCINNATI – A former insurance agent pleaded guilty in U.S. District Court to defrauding dozens of victims in the Cincinnati and Dayton area.

Specifically, Seneca Birchmore, 45, of Cincinnati, admitted to committing aggravated identity theft, a federal crime punishable by a mandatory two-year prison sentence. Birchmore also fraudulently obtained two COVID Paycheck Protection Program loans.

According to court documents, Birchmore lost his license as an insurance agent in 2019 because he was writing unauthorized insurance policies so that he could collect the commissions.

After losing his license, Birchmore then stole the identities of two other insurance agents and used those identities to write more life insurance policies for customers who did not want them. Birchmore had the commissions from dozens of local customer victims deposited into his own bank accounts.

Local law enforcement departments received complaints from victims that money was being automatically withdrawn from their bank accounts for insurance policies they never ordered. Many of the victims are senior citizens, and most reside in Dayton, Englewood, Middletown and Cincinnati.

The commissions for Birchmore's original fraudulent insurance policies under his own name as an agent totaled more than \$8,000. The commissions for policies created under the stolen identities of other agents totaled more than \$93,000.

As part of his plea, Birchmore has agreed to pay the following restitution:

- Americo Financial Life and Annuity Insurance Company: \$34,820.37
- Columbian Life Insurance Company: \$16,604.01
- Transamerica Life Insurance Company: \$4,671
- Mutual of Omaha: \$2,104.65
- Great Western Insurance Company: \$16,303.17
- Aetna Health and Life Insurance Company: \$8,826.84
- American General Life Insurance Company: \$158.82
- Guarantee Trust Life Insurance Company: \$17,906.07
- U.S. Small Business Administration: \$41,665

In a separate scheme, Birchmore fraudulently obtained two COVID Paycheck Protection Program loans totaling more than \$40,000. Birchmore claimed on both loan applications that he owned a

business in his name and stated his gross income for 2019 was more than \$13 million. No such business exists.

The defendant was charged federally and arrested in June 2022.

Kenneth L. Parker, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio, was joined by the Social Security Office of Inspector General, U.S. Secret Service, Ohio Department of Insurance, Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles, U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General, U.S. Marshals Service, Butler County Sheriff's Office and Cincinnati Police Department in announcing the guilty plea entered yesterday before Senior U.S. District Judge Susan J. Dlott. Special Assistant United States Attorney Timothy Landry is representing the United States in this case.

#

Topic(s):
Identity Theft

Component(s):
USAO - Ohio, Southern