

Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

District of Massachusetts

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, March 15, 2022

New York Man Pleads Guilty to COVID-19 Relief Fraud Scheme

BOSTON – A New York Man pleaded guilty today to charges arising from a scheme to fraudulently obtain business loans and unemployment pandemic relief funds made available under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

Ronald Buie, 35, pleaded guilty to one count of wire fraud before U.S. District Court Judge Douglas P. Woodlock who scheduled sentencing for June 24, 2022. Buie was charged on Jan. 25, 2022.

Buie engaged in a scheme to defraud the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) by submitting fraudulent applications for loans offered in connection with the CARES Act. As part of this scheme, Buie used various false identities to apply for and obtain fraudulent SBA loans in amounts exceeding \$219,000. Buie also submitted fraudulent documentation to apply for and obtain a fraudulent SBA loan for \$60,000 for his company, Platinum Car Service LLC. Specifically, in support of his loan application, Buie provided what he purported to be a monthly bank statement for his business checking account showing an ending balance of more than \$198,000, whereas bank records for that particular month show that the actual balance was less than \$3,000. In addition, Buie's scheme also involved the utilization of various false identities to apply for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance benefits in Massachusetts and Ohio.

The charge of wire fraud provides for a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, up to three years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and statutes which govern the determination of a sentence in a criminal case.

United States Attorney Rachael S. Rollins; Mark Comorosky, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Secret Service, Boston Field Office; Jonathan Mellone, Special Agent in Charge of Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, Labor Racketeering and Fraud Investigations; and Ketty Larco-Ward, Inspector in Charge of the United States Postal Inspection Service made the announcement today. Valuable assistance was provided by the U.S. Secret Service, New York Field Office; Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance; and the New York City Police Department. Assistant U.S. Attorney William F. Abely, Chief of Rollins' Criminal Division, is 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

Component(s):

[USAO - Massachusetts](#)

Updated March 15, 2022