

**PRESS RELEASE**

# **Baltimore Man Pleads Guilty in Federal Court to Fentanyl, Firearm, and Unemployment Insurance Fraud Charges**

Wednesday, May 14, 2025

**For Immediate Release**

U.S. Attorney's Office, District of Maryland

**Greenbelt, Maryland** – Today, Vincent Ford, 22, of Baltimore, Maryland, pled guilty in federal court to possession with intent to distribute fentanyl and oxycodone; possession of a firearm and ammunition by a convicted felon; and wire fraud, in connection with fraudulently obtaining COVID-19 unemployment insurance (UI) benefits.

Kelly O. Hayes, U.S. Attorney for the District of Maryland, announced the plea with Special Agent in Charge Toni M. Crosby, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF); Special Agent in Charge Troy W. Springer, National Capital Region, U.S. Department of Labor – Office of Inspector General (DOL-OIG); and Chief Malik Aziz, Prince George's County Police Department (PGPD).

According to the guilty plea, on February 17, 2023, PGPD officers conducted a traffic stop on a vehicle with heavily tinted windows. During the traffic stop, officers detected the odor of marijuana coming from the vehicle. The driver acknowledged there was marijuana in the car.

Ford was the passenger in the vehicle and officers noticed that he was wearing an unzipped gray satchel. After searching the vehicle, officers found a loaded Taurus G3C semi-automatic firearm under the passenger seat where Ford had been sitting. It was loaded with 13 rounds of 9mm ammunition in the magazine and one round of 9mm ammunition in the chamber ready to be fired. The firearm was previously reported stolen from a vehicle in Baltimore County.

Law enforcement also searched Ford's satchel and person, recovering 46 30mg blue pills that contained fentanyl, a 20mg white pill that contained oxycodone, three 15mg green pills that contained oxycodone, and more than \$1,000 in cash.

Ford admitted to possessing the fentanyl and oxycodone pills with the intent to distribute them. He also acknowledged that he possessed the loaded Taurus firearm in furtherance of his drug trafficking. Due to a previous felony conviction, Ford is prohibited from possessing firearms and ammunition.

Additionally, a subsequent investigation revealed that Ford also engaged in COVID-19 UI fraud. According to the plea, between at least June 13, 2020, and November 19, 2020, Ford participated in a scheme to defraud the Maryland Department of Labor of at least \$17,000 in UI benefits during the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, several federal programs expanded UI eligibility and increased UI benefits to provide emergency assistance to struggling Americans. Ford fraudulently took advantage of that program and filed at least six false UI claims, using stolen identities of real persons. Two of the fraudulent claims resulted in the disbursement of \$17,000 in funds in the names of two of the identity theft victims. He obtained \$2,580 of that amount from a bank card in the name of one of the victims.

Ford faces a maximum sentence of 15 years for the felon in possession of a firearm and ammunition charge; a maximum of 20 years for possession with intent to distribute fentanyl and oxycodone; and a maximum of 20 years for wire fraud in connection with his fraudulent COVID-19 unemployment insurance scheme. Judge Deborah L. Boardman scheduled sentencing for Monday, November 3, at 2 p.m.

This case is part of Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN), a program bringing together all levels of law enforcement and the communities they serve to reduce violent crime and gun violence, and to make our neighborhoods safer for everyone. On May 26, 2021, the Department launched a violent crime reduction strategy strengthening PSN based on these core principles: fostering trust and legitimacy in our communities, supporting community-based organizations that help prevent violence from occurring in the first place, setting focused and strategic enforcement priorities, and measuring the results.

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, 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>.

U.S. Attorney Hayes commended the ATF, DOL-OIG, and PGPD for their work in the investigation. Ms. Hayes also thanked Assistant U.S. Attorneys Patrick D. Kibbe and Nicholas F. Potter who are prosecuting the case.

For more information about the Maryland U.S. Attorney’s Office, its priorities, and resources available to help the community, visit [www.justice.gov/usao-md](http://www.justice.gov/usao-md) and <https://www.justice.gov/usao-md/community-outreach>.

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## Topics

**CORONAVIRUS**

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## Components

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