



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

PRESS RELEASE

No Amount Too Small, No Fraud Too Large — And Counting: DOL OIG Secures Prison Sentences for Pandemic UI Fraud — From Casino Cash-Outs to Multimillion Dollar Schemes, No Fraudster Spared

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Fraud knows no boundaries, undermining the integrity of our benefit programs and exploiting hardworking American citizens. Under the leadership of Inspector General Anthony P. D’Esposito, the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General (DOL OIG) is waging an unrelenting war on those who steal from the American people. The DOL OIG understands that every dollar matters in the fight to eliminate the rampant fraud plaguing our great nation. The days of fraudulent Unemployment Insurance schemes, pandemic theft, and money laundering are over.

NEWPORT NEWS, VA. — A Virginia woman, Lakeia Simone Grant, who is a five-time convicted felon, was recently sentenced to 7 years and 4 months in prison for conspiracy to commit mail fraud and aggravated identity theft involving the filing of unemployment insurance (UI) claims in the names of prison inmates and others. Grant and her co-conspirators filed approximately 38 successful UI claims in the names and information of inmates, resulting in payments totaling approximately \$546,576 in benefits. The FBI’s Norfolk Field Office; DOL OIG; and U.S. Department of Homeland Security OIG investigated this case. “Lakeia Simone Grant thought she could exploit the identities of prison inmates, file 38 fraudulent claims and steal over \$546,000 — not on our watch. My office alongside Vice President Vance’s Task Force to Eliminate Fraud exists to protect the integrity of programs that serve hardworking Americans — not five-time convicted felons cheating the system,” said Anthony P. D’Esposito, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Labor. “Seven years in federal prison should send a clear

message to any fraudster who thinks they can hide: we are watching, we are relentless, and we are coming for you.”

MOBILE, AL. — New York man, Demetrius J. Manassa, and Alabama man, Jarrod A. Ross, were sentenced to a collective 22 years in prison for their roles in a complex multimillion dollar bank fraud and identity theft scheme. Their crimes included the submission of more than \$400,000 in fraudulent pandemic-related unemployment insurance claims made in multiple states. This was a joint investigation with the U.S. Postal Inspection Service. “Demetrius Manassa and Jarrod Ross stole money meant to help Americans find work. These sentences send a strong message to fraudsters: if you steal from the federal government and taxpayers, my office will relentlessly pursue you,” said Anthony P. D’Esposito, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Labor. “We will work together with other law enforcement partners and have zero tolerance for fraud. We will find you and hold you accountable.”

CEDAR RAPIDS, IA. — Illinois woman, Jackie L. Smith, who has an extensive criminal history, was sentenced to more than 3 years in federal prison for fraudulently obtaining approximately \$100,000 in pandemic-era unemployment insurance benefits, which she then converted to cash at a casino. The case was investigated by the DOL OIG and the Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation. “When hardworking Americans were struggling to make ends meet, Jackie L. Smith was at a casino cashing out \$100,000 in stolen pandemic relief. This crime is not just deplorable; it is a betrayal of every American taxpayer who funded those benefits,” said Anthony P. D’Esposito, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Labor. “The Office of Inspector General remains dedicated to ensuring no fraudster gets a pass, putting them behind bars where they belong and delivering justice.”

No amount too small, no fraud too large — and counting.

For additional information on DOL OIG, please visit oig.dol.gov. If you suspect wrongdoing involving DOL programs or operations, contact the DOL-OIG Hotline at (800) 347-3756 or oig.dol.gov/hotlinecontact.htm.

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