

PRESS RELEASE

"John Doe" Pleads Guilty and Discloses Identity

Tuesday, April 16, 2024

For Immediate Release

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

Defendant used stolen identity for decades; received PUA benefits, U.S. passport and Massachusetts driver's license

BOSTON – A defendant charged under the pseudonym "John Doe" pleaded guilty last week to fraud charges. In addition to pleading guilty, the defendant admitted that his true name is Jose Then.

Jose Then, age unknown, pleaded guilty to mail fraud; false statement in an application for a passport; misuse of a social security number; and aggravated identity theft. U.S. District Court Judge Richard G. Stearns scheduled sentencing for July 10, 2024. Then was indicted by a federal grand jury in October 2023.

Then acquired the name and identity of an individual and has been using the victim's name, date of birth and Social Security for decades. Then used the victim's stolen personal identifying information to acquire a U.S. passport, a Massachusetts driver's license and receive thousands of dollars in Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) benefits. The victim has suffered garnishment of his wages for child support costs that Then has failed to pay under the stolen identity.

The charge of misuse of a social security number provides for a sentence of up to five years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. The charge of false statement in a passport application provides for a sentence of up to 10 years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. The charge of mail fraud provides for a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, three years supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. The charge of aggravated identity theft calls for a mandatory minimum sentence of two years in prison to be added to the felony committed while using the means of identification of another without lawful authority. 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.

Acting United States Attorney Joshua S. Levy and Michael J. Krol, Special Agent in Charge of Homeland Security Investigations in New England made the announcement today. Valuable assistance was provided by Homeland Security Investigations in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic; Puerto Rico Department of Public Safety; U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General; U.S. Department of State's Diplomatic Security Service; U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Office of Inspector General; U.S. Postal Inspection Service; Massachusetts State Police Fraud Identification Unit; and the Weymouth and Quincy Police Departments. Assistant U.S. Attorney Brian Sullivan of the Major Crimes Unit is prosecuting the case.

The investigation was conducted by Homeland Security Investigation's Document and Benefit Fraud Task Force (DBFTF), a specialized investigative group comprising personnel from various state, local, and federal agencies with expertise in detecting, deterring, and disrupting organizations and individuals involved in various types of document, identity, and benefit fraud schemes.

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 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> and <https://www.justice.gov/coronavirus/combatingfraud>.

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 via the [NCDF Web Complaint Form](#).

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