

**Department of Justice**  
U.S. Attorney's Office  
Northern District of Georgia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, June 29, 2022

## **Metro Atlanta man charged with money laundering related to COVID-19 Unemployment Insurance benefit fraud**

ATLANTA - Oluwagbemiga Otufale has been arraigned on federal charges of conspiracy and money laundering. Otufale was indicted by a federal grand jury on June 21, 2022

“Money launderers function as the financiers of criminal organizations, enabling the victimization of our communities while hiding behind a shield of anonymity built through a maze of aliases, bank accounts, and business transactions,” said U.S. Attorney Ryan K. Buchanan. “We will continue to bring sophisticated money launderers to justice, especially the criminals who exploited the pandemic to steal from those in need.”

“It is disheartening to see the lengths that some individuals will go to take advantage of people in need during a national and world crisis,” said Keri Farley, Special Agent in Charge of FBI Atlanta. “No matter how elaborate or complicated the fraud scheme, the FBI and our partners will work to uncover it and bring those responsible to justice.”

“An important mission of the Office of Inspector General is to investigate allegations of fraud related to unemployment insurance benefit programs. We will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to investigate these types of allegations,” stated Mathew Broadhurst, Special Agent-in-Charge, Atlanta Region, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General.

According to U.S. Attorney Buchanan, the charges, and other information presented in court: The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (“CARES”) Act created a temporary federal program that provided up to 39 weeks of unemployment benefits for those unemployed as a result of the pandemic and included a provision to provide temporary benefits to individuals who had exhausted their entitlement to regular benefits or were otherwise not eligible. That temporary federal program was administered by state employment agencies.

Oluwagbemiga Otufale allegedly laundered money procured from fraudulent unemployment claims submitted to state employment agencies in Washington, Illinois, and Massachusetts. These claims were filed using stolen personally identifiable information of over a hundred individuals. Otufale also allegedly laundered proceeds from a business email compromise scheme targeting two Georgia businesses. Additionally, Otufale allegedly created multiple aliases and sham business entities to open financial accounts in which he deposited the fraudulent proceeds.

Oluwagbemiga Otufale, a/k/a Joseph Perrone, a/k/a Kelvin Benjamin, a/k/a Abraham Young, 44, of Riverdale, Georgia, who was arraigned before U.S. Magistrate Judge J. Elizabeth McBath, was charged with money laundering conspiracy and concealment money laundering as a result of these activities. Members of the public are reminded that the indictment only contains charges. The defendant is presumed innocent of the charges and it will be the government’s burden to prove the defendant’s guilt beyond a reasonable doubt at trial.

This case is being investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Sarah E. Klapman and Tracia King are 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>

The U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is part of the Georgia Unemployment Insurance Task Force. The Task Force is comprised of federal and state agencies throughout Georgia that are dedicated to combat COVID-related Unemployment Insurance Benefit Fraud.

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>.

For further information please contact the U.S. Attorney's Public Affairs Office at [USAGAN.PressEmails@usdoj.gov](mailto:USAGAN.PressEmails@usdoj.gov) or (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is <http://www.justice.gov/usao-ndga>.

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