

Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

District of Rhode Island

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

**Providence Man Detained on Fraud Charges, Threatening a
Corrections Officer**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – A Providence man has been ordered detained in federal custody on charges that he filed fraudulent applications for pandemic unemployment assistance payments in at least eight states and that he threatened to assault a corrections officer, announced United States Attorney Zachary A. Cunha and Rhode Island Attorney General Peter F. Neronha.

Mackenzzy Scott, 25, is charged by way of a federal superseding indictment with conspiracy to commit wire fraud, seven counts of wire fraud, four counts of aggravated identity theft, theft of government money, and threat to assault a federal corrections officer. He was arraigned in U.S. District Court on Tuesday.

It is alleged in charging documents that Scott filed fraudulent applications seeking unemployment insurance benefits provided for by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act and the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) Program from the states of North Dakota, Massachusetts, Arizona, Nevada, California, Kentucky, Texas, and Pennsylvania. It is alleged that Scott filed at least four applications using the personal identifying information of others in three different states, and that he filed fraudulent applications in his own name in at least seven states.

Scott's alleged fraudulent activity was discovered by a Rhode Island U.S. Probation Officer during a routine inspection of Scott's cellphone. At the time, Scott was serving a term of federal supervised release, having completed a term of incarceration of 60 months on a conviction for conspiracy to commit sex trafficking of a child. Scott's cellphone was turned over to the FBI and Rhode Island State Police to further investigate Scott's alleged fraudulent activity.

It is alleged that Scott fraudulently collected at least \$102,000 in PUA benefits.

Scott was charged by federal criminal complaint for the alleged fraudulent unemployment insurance activity on June 1, 2021, and, after making his initial appearance on the complaint, he was ordered detained on June 2, 2021. It is further alleged that while detained on the criminal complaint, Scott threatened a corrections officer at the Donald W. Wyatt Correctional Facility.

A federal indictment is merely an accusation. A defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

This case, as well as other instances of criminal activity related to fraudulent applications for pandemic-related unemployment insurance benefits are being investigated jointly by the FBI, the Rhode Island State Police, and the U.S. Department of Labor – Office of Inspector General. Cases are jointly reviewed, charged, and prosecuted by a team of prosecutors that include Assistant U.S. Attorneys Denise M. Barton, Stacey P. Veroni, and G. Michael Seaman, and Rhode Island Assistant Attorney General John M. Moreira, chief of the Rhode Island Attorney General's Public Integrity Unit.

Rhode Islanders who believe their personal identification has been stolen and used to fraudulently obtain unemployment benefits are urged to contact the Rhode Island State Police at financialcrimes@risp.gov or the FBI Providence office at (401) 272-8310.

On May 17, 2021, the United States 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>.

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Topic(s):

Coronavirus
Financial Fraud

Component(s):

[Federal Bureau of Investigation \(FBI\)](#)
[USAO - Rhode Island](#)

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