Two Men Indicted for COVID Unemployment and Loan Fraud

Thursday, January 30, 2025

For Immediate Release
U.S. Attorney's Office, District of Massachusetts

Defendants allegedly received over $43,000 in Pandemic Unemployment Assistance funds

BOSTON – Two men were arrested for allegedly submitting fraudulent information in an effort to obtain loans through the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program.

Dominik Manigo, 25, of Weymouth, and Nelson Roche Diaz, 28, of Brockton, were indicted by a federal grand jury on one count of wire fraud conspiracy, and on one count each of wire fraud. Manigo and Roche appeared in federal court in Boston on Monday.

According to the charging documents, in or about May 2020, Manigo and Roche allegedly submitted fraudulent claims for PUA on the Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance portal. Further, Manigo and Roche allegedly submitted fraudulent letters claiming the pandemic had impacted their employment at a restaurant in Boston. Manigo and Roche each allegedly received over $43,000 in PUA and related funds.

The charges of wire fraud and wire fraud conspiracy provide for a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, up to three years of supervised release and a fine of up to $250,000. 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.

United States Attorney Leah B. Foley; Jonathan Mellone, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, Office of Investigations, Labor Racketeering and Fraud, Northeast Region; Michael J. Krol, Special Agent in Charge of Homeland Security Investigations in New England; Colonel Geoffrey D. Noble, Superintendent of the Massachusetts State Police; Boston Police Commissioner Michael Cox; and Thomas Demeo, Acting Special Agent in Charge of the Internal Revenue

Service Criminal Investigation, Boston Field Office made the announcement today. Valuable assistance was provided by the Weymouth Police Department. Assistant U.S. Attorney Samuel R. Feldman of the Narcotics and Money Laundering Unit is prosecuting the case.

This case is part of an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) operation. OCDETF identifies, disrupts, and dismantles the highest-level criminal organizations that threaten the United States using a prosecutor-led, intelligence-driven, multi-agency approach. Additional information about the OCDETF Program can be found at https://www.justice.gov/OCDETF.

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 https://www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud/webform/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form.https://www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud/webform/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form

The details contained in the charging documents are allegations. The defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

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