

**Department of Justice**

U.S. Attorney's Office

Eastern District of Michigan

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, December 7, 2021

**Two Defendants Charged with Unemployment Insurance  
Benefit Fraud Combined Actual Losses in Excess of \$3.2  
Million**

**DETROIT** - Two defendants have been charged in criminal complaints for their roles in unemployment insurance benefit fraud schemes, announced Acting United States Attorney Saima Mohsin.

Joining in this announcement are Irene Lindow, Special Agent-in-Charge, Chicago Region, U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General, Sarah Kull, Special Agent-in-Charge Internal Revenue Service Detroit and Julia Dale, Director, Michigan Unemployment Insurance Agency.

Tauheed Salik Wilder, 39, of Detroit, MI, and Shuqueni Renee Franklin, 30, of Shelby Township, MI are charged in separate complaints with mail fraud, wire fraud, aggravated identity theft, and money laundering. Wilder and Franklin were arrested today.

Between them, according to the complaints, Wilder and Franklin are responsible for filing at least 470 claims for fraudulent unemployment insurance benefits in at least 5 States, including Michigan. Their illegal activity caused actual losses of over \$4 million and attempted losses of over \$13 million. It is alleged that both Wilder and Franklin filed numerous false claims using their own names and false social security numbers. Wilder and Franklin also used the stolen identity of other individuals to file false claims for unemployment insurance benefits. Both Wilder and Franklin were caught on bank surveillance cameras using ATM cards in names of individuals whose identity they had stolen to withdraw the illegally obtained unemployment benefits.

"The funds stolen by these defendants were intended to be used to ease the burden of unemployment suffered by residents of Michigan and other States. Those who steal unemployment benefits steal from all taxpayers and jeopardize the safety net Congress enacted to protect employees who lost jobs during the pandemic. These arrests reflect our ongoing commitment to investigating these schemes and bringing the people who commit these crimes to justice," stated Acting US Attorney Saima M. Mohsin.

"An important part of the mission of the Office of Inspector General is to investigate allegations involving unemployment insurance fraud. We will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to investigate these types of allegations," stated Irene Lindow, Special Agent-in-Charge, Chicago Region, U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General.

"When someone loses their job, they trust that help will be there to get them through rough times. Thieves jeopardize that trust and threaten the safety net for those truly in need. We won't let that happen," said Juila Dale, Director of the Michigan Unemployment Insurance Agency. "Through the tireless work of the Michigan Unemployment Insurance Fraud Task Force, we are bringing these criminals to justice and the Task Force partners should be commended for their efforts. I would also

urge anyone who knows of any UI fraud scheme to go to [Michigan.gov/UIA](https://www.michigan.gov/UIA) and click on the Report Fraud link.”

"Unemployment insurance was designed to provide much needed financial assistance to those in need during a global pandemic. IRS-CI and our law enforcement partners are committed to investigating those who steal government assistance for their personal benefit," stated Special Agent in Charge Sarah Kull, IRS-CI Detroit Field Office.

A complaint is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. Trial cannot be held on felony charges in a complaint. When the investigations are completed, determinations will be made whether to seek felony indictments.

**Topic(s):**

Coronavirus

**Component(s):**

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