

**Department of Justice**  
U.S. Attorney's Office  
Western District of Oklahoma

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, January 30, 2023

## **Coronavirus Fraud Task Force Getting Results**

OKLAHOMA CITY — Launched in April 2021, the Western District of Oklahoma Coronavirus Fraud Task Force is getting results. The Task Force combines the efforts of federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to investigate and prosecute fraud related to the COVID-19 pandemic. It focuses on programs created or funded by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security ACT (CARES Act) and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), and it is designed to find the best way to detect, deter, and punish those who take advantage of federal and state programs during the pandemic. These programs include, but are not limited to, fraud involving the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL), the Main Street Lending Program, unemployment insurance fraud, and fraud involving pandemic-related supplies.

To date, Task Force efforts have produced the following cases:

Sentencings:

- **STEVEN MESROP**, 30, of Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada; **MIRNA MAHROUS HABIB**, 25, of Mississauga, Ontario, Canada; **KARIN TREISTER**, 25 of Toronto, Canada; and **DIJON CORNELIUS SHEPARD**, 28, of Los Angeles, California, were collectively ordered to serve 104 months in federal prison and pay nearly \$3.5 million in restitution. Public records reflect the defendants pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit wire fraud and related crimes for participating in a scheme to fraudulently acquire personal protective equipment and event tickets, which came to the attention of law enforcement in Oklahoma when co-conspirators used stolen credit card information from 52 credit cards to purchase \$678,842.03 worth of tickets to Oklahoma State University athletic events. The defendants also targeted U.S.-based businesses selling pandemic related supplies during the COVID-19 pandemic. For more information about this case, visit: <https://www.justice.gov/usao-wdok/pr/canadian-man-pleads-guilty-conspiracy-fraudulently-acquire-personal-protective>.
- **ALFRED SMITH**, 37, of Miami, Florida, was sentenced on July 27, 2022, to serve 30 months in federal prison and ordered to pay \$246,606.50 in restitution. Public records reflect Smith committed access device fraud using debit cards issued by the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission (OESC), the state workforce agency tasked with administering the unemployment insurance program in Oklahoma. Smith used stolen identities to obtain unemployment insurance benefits from OESC. After OESC issued debit cards containing the unemployment benefits, Smith used the debit cards to withdraw cash from local ATMs. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress provided additional funding under the CARES Act and ARPA for unemployment benefits, which made the unemployment insurance program a target for fraudulent schemes.

- **ANDRICE SAINVIL**, 20, of Margate, Florida, was sentenced on December 29, 2022, to serve 24 months in federal prison and ordered to pay \$26,699.80 in restitution. Public records reflect that Sainvil conspired with others to steal the identities of dozens of Oklahomans, use their victims' names and social security numbers to apply for fraudulent unemployment insurance benefits with OESC, and caused OESC to mail prepaid debit cards containing those fraudulently obtained benefits to addresses accessible to coconspirators. Sainvil then retrieved those prepaid debit cards and used them to withdraw thousands of dollars in cash from ATMs throughout Oklahoma City and elsewhere. For more information about this case, visit: <https://www.justice.gov/usao-wdok/pr/florida-man-sentenced-two-years-federal-prison-pandemic-related-fraud>.

Guilty Pleas:

- **JILL NICOLE FORD**, 31, formerly of Edmond, Oklahoma, pleaded guilty on January 20, 2022, to bank fraud and money laundering. According to public records, Ford fraudulently obtained a loan through the Main Street Lending Program for her business Oliver & Olivia Apparel, Inc. In the loan application, Ford falsely represented that she would use the loan proceeds for working capital and payroll only, and that she would not make distributions to herself as the company's owner. Despite these representations, Ford used a portion of the proceeds to pay for construction on her personal home and to purchase a luxury SUV for her personal use. At sentencing, Ford faces up to 30 years of imprisonment and a fine of up to \$1,000,000 for bank fraud. She also faces up to 10 years of imprisonment and a fine of up to \$250,000 for money laundering. For more information about this case, visit: <https://www.justice.gov/usao-wdok/pr/edmond-woman-pleads-guilty-cares-act-main-street-lending-program-fraud>.
- **BRIAN FOSTER**, 53, of Norman, Oklahoma, pleaded guilty on November 15, 2022, to making a false statement to a financial institution. According to public records, Foster provided false income and tax information to a bank when applying for a \$20,833 PPP loan in another person's name. At sentencing, Foster faces up to 30 years of imprisonment and a fine of up to \$1,000,000.
- **RANDISHA PARKER**, 41, of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, pleaded guilty on January 5, 2023, to making a false statement to the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). According to public records, Parker knowingly made false statements to the SBA when she applied for a \$56,000 EIDL loan. At sentencing, Parker faces up to two years of imprisonment and a fine of up to \$5,000.
- **OCTAVIO SANCHEZ**, 49, of Norman, Oklahoma, pleaded guilty on January 18, 2023, to conspiracy and aggravated identity theft. According to public records, Sanchez used the identity of his deceased sister to apply for \$3,200 in economic impact payments from the Internal Revenue Service. The CARES Act authorized economic impact payments, also known as stimulus checks, to eligible individuals to address the economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional rounds of economic impact payments were authorized by the COVID-related Tax Relief Act of 2020 and ARPA. At sentencing, Sanchez faces up to five years of imprisonment and up to a \$250,000 fine for conspiracy and a mandatory term of imprisonment of 24 months for aggravated identify theft.

Sentencings take place approximately 90 days after a plea of guilty.

Charged:

- **NAQUIB U. HATAMI**, 50, of Fairfax, Virginia, was charged by information on December 7, 2022, for making a false statement to a financial institution. According to public records, Hatami gave false information to a bank regarding his company's payroll and number of employees when he applied for a \$160,480 PPP loan. If convicted of making a false statement to a financial institution, Hatami faces up to 30 years of imprisonment and a fine of up to \$1,000,000.

The public is reminded that charges are merely allegations and that the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

These investigations were led by the FBI Oklahoma City Field Office; Special Inspector General for Pandemic Recovery (SIGPR); the Internal Revenue Service–Criminal Investigations; the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration; the Federal Reserve Board Office of Inspector General; the U.S. Small Business Administration Office of Inspector General; the United States Secret Service; Homeland Security New York's El Dorado Task Force, the New York City Police Department, the Irvine (California) Police Department, with assistance from Customs and Border Protection; the Department of Labor Office of Inspector General, the Oklahoma City Police Department; and the Village Police Department.

The prosecutions arising out of these investigations were handled by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Jessica Perry, Bow Bottomly, Will Farrior, Julia Barry, Danielle London, and D.H. Dilbeck, with assistance from Paralegals Karen Hadrava and Melody Harris.

Reference is made to public filings for more information on these cases.

For further information on Department of Justice response to the pandemic, please visit <https://www.justice.gov/coronavirus> or <https://www.justice.gov/usao-wdok/covid-19-fraud-0>. 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>.

**Component(s):**

USAO - Oklahoma, Western

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