

**Department of Justice**

U.S. Attorney's Office

District of Nevada

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, October 26, 2021

## **Las Vegas Woman Pleads Guilty To Using At Least 40 Stolen Identities To Fraudulently Collect Over \$175,000 In Unemployment Insurance Benefits**

**LAS VEGAS, Nev.** – A Las Vegas woman pleaded guilty today to using at least 40 stolen identities to fraudulently collect approximately \$175,622 in unemployment insurance benefits from the California Employment Development Department (EDD), the administrator of the federally funded unemployment insurance benefit program for residents of the State of California.

According to court documents and admissions made in court, Danielle Lacharis Buck (aka Danielle Lacharis Lakey), 45, participated in a scheme from September 2010 to April 2019 to defraud the California EDD into paying her approximately \$175,622 in unemployment insurance benefits. As part of the scheme, Buck obtained stolen identities through her job in the medical industry. She used her access to patient and co-worker information to steal personal identifying information — such as names, dates of birth, and social security numbers of unsuspecting individuals — and then electronically filed false unemployment claims using the stolen names and information. In total, Buck filed more than 50 false unemployment insurance claims using at least 40 different stolen identities. She withdrew cash from an unemployment insurance benefits debit cards at ATMs in the Las Vegas and Los Angeles metropolitan areas.

Buck pleaded guilty to one count of mail fraud and one count of aggravated identity theft. She faces a statutory maximum penalty of 20 years in prison for mail fraud and a mandatory minimum two-year term in prison for aggravated identity theft. U.S. District Judge Kent J. Dawson scheduled sentencing for January 25, 2022.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Christopher Chiou for the District of Nevada and Special Agent in Charge Quentin Heiden of the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General (DOL-OIG), Los Angeles Region made the announcement.

The case was investigated by the DOL-OIG. Assistant U.S. Attorney Eric Schmale is 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>.

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 Hotline at 866-720-5721 or

via the NCDF Web Complaint Form at: <https://www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form>.

To learn more about the Department of Justice's COVID response, visit: <https://www.justice.gov/coronavirus>.

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**Topic(s):**  
Coronavirus  
Financial Fraud  
Identity Theft

**Component(s):**  
[USAO - Nevada](#)