



Department of Justice

**United States Attorney Rachael S. Rollins
District of Massachusetts**

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CONTACT: CHRISTINA DiIORIO-STERLING

Phone (617) 748-3356

usama.media@usdoj.gov

 twitter.com/dmanews1

READING MAN SENTENCED FOR WIRE FRAUD AND IDENTITY THEFT

BOSTON – A Reading man has been sentenced in connection with a scheme to defraud an elderly relative of her interest in a three-family home and a separate scheme to defraud the Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance.

Giorgio “George” Fiorenza, 51, was sentenced on May 17, 2022 by U.S. District Court Judge Leo T. Sorokin to three years in prison and three years of supervised release. Fiorenza was also ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$20,508. On Dec. 14, 2021, Fiorenza pleaded guilty to two counts of wire fraud and one count of aggravated identity theft.

Between August and September 2017, Fiorenza defrauded an elderly relative into signing a deed conveying her interest in a property she owned with Fiorenza’s spouse and forged the victim’s name on another document necessary to convey title to the property, both of which were recorded in the Middlesex Registry of Deeds. Fiorenza then took out a \$750,000 loan in his spouse’s name and secured by the property, and subsequently caused the lender to foreclose on the property. As a result of Fiorenza’s conduct, the victim was forced to move from the only home she had ever known, where she had lived for more than seven decades and where her family had had roots for generations.

Between April and June 2020, Fiorenza filed claims for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) in the names of third parties and fraudulently diverted some of the funds for his own use. PUA was a temporary federal unemployment insurance program created when Congress passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) in March 2020 in response to the global coronavirus pandemic. The PUA program, which in Massachusetts was administered by the Department of Unemployment Assistance, provided unemployment insurance benefits for individuals who were not eligible for other types of unemployment benefits. Among other things, Fiorenza filed a PUA claim using a victim’s identity, directed the proceeds of the claim to an account in his spouse’s name, and did not disclose to the victim or her husband that she had qualified for assistance.

United States Attorney Rachael S. Rollins; Joseph R. Bonavolonta, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Division; and Jonathan Mellone, Special Agent in Charge of Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, Labor Racketeering & Fraud Investigations, made the announcement. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Kristen A. Kearney and David M. Holcomb of Rollins' Securities, Financial & Cyber Fraud Unit prosecuted 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 (NCDF) Hotline at 866-720-5721 or via the NCDF Web Complaint Form at: <https://www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form>.

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