

**PRESS RELEASE**

# Eleven Charged in \$4.5 Million Dollar Pandemic Fraud Scheme

Tuesday, August 1, 2023

**For Immediate Release**

U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of Michigan

**DETROIT** - Eleven residents of southeast Michigan have been charged in a 23-count indictment for their alleged role in a multi-million-dollar unemployment insurance fraud scheme targeting funds set aside for unemployment assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic, announced United States Attorney Dawn N. Ison.

Joining in the announcement were Department of Labor – Office of the Inspector General (DOL-OIG) Special Agent-in-Charge of the Great Lakes Region, Irene Lindow, and Acting Special Agent in Charge Devin J. Kowalski of the Detroit Field Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

Charged are Marcellus Dunham, 23, of Redford, Jaylin Davis, 22, of Detroit, Daniel Holt, 21, Day'on Holt, 22, both of Detroit, Daveontae White, 24, of West Bloomfield, Armani Haller, 22, of Clinton Township, Aaniya Carroll, 22, of Detroit, Laron Stroud, 23, of Detroit, Jaylin Qualls, 23, of Harper Woods, Cheikh Sene, 23, of Southfield, and Deleonte Rogers, 23, of Westland. Each defendant is charged with conspiracy to commit wire fraud, wire fraud, and aggravated identity theft.

According to the indictment, the eleven defendants used stolen personal identifying information of other individuals to file fraudulent claims for pandemic unemployment assistance in multiple states. The indictment alleges that the defendants illegally obtained over \$4.5 million in government funds over the course of their scheme.

"My office won't cease our efforts to hold accountable those who used a global pandemic to enrich themselves at the expense of taxpayers," stated U. S. Attorney Dawn Ison.

"An important part of the mission of the Office of Inspector General is to investigate allegations of fraud related to unemployment insurance programs. We will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to aggressively investigate these types of

allegations”, said Irene Lindow, Special Agent in Charge, Chicago Region, U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General.

“Unfortunately, many people believed they could defraud unemployment programs during the global pandemic and never face the consequences,” said Devin J. Kowalski, Acting Special Agent in Charge of the FBI’s Detroit Field Office. “This investigation proves the FBI, and our state and federal partners, will continue to investigate and bring these criminals to justice no matter how long it takes.”

The defendants face up to twenty years in prison based on the wire fraud and wire fraud conspiracy charges, and a mandatory two-year prison sentence for aggravated identity theft.

An indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. All defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Ryan Particka and Sarah Youngblood. The investigation is being conducted jointly by the FBI, DOL- OIG, Department of Homeland Security, Homeland Security Investigations, and the State of Michigan Unemployment Insurance Agency.

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