

PRESS RELEASE

# U.S. Postal Service Employee Convicted of Theft of Postal Money Orders and Wire Fraud

Wednesday, November 1, 2023

## For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, District of Massachusetts

BOSTON – A U.S. Postal Service (USPS) employee was convicted today by a federal jury in Boston of embezzling over \$90,000 and fraudulently obtaining unemployment benefits.

Jamesa Rankins, 27, of Brockton, was convicted of one count of theft of government money and three counts of wire fraud. U.S. District Court Judge Richard G. Stearns scheduled sentencing for Feb. 2, 2024. In July 2022, Rankins was indicted by a federal grand jury.

*“The public’s trust and confidence in our government is eroded when federal employees abuse their positions for personal gain. That is exactly what happened in this case. Ms. Rankins exploited her position to embezzle nearly \$100,000 in money orders from her employer, the U.S. Postal Service, at the same time she was trying to fleece taxpayers by fraudulently claiming unemployment benefits,” said Acting United States Attorney Joshua S. Levy. “Today’s guilty verdict should be a stern warning to all who contemplate scamming the government – you will be identified, prosecuted and held accountable.”*

“The Special Agents of the U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General are committed to maintaining the integrity of the Postal Service and its personnel. When a Postal Service employee abuses their position and decides to break the public’s trust, USPS

OIG Special Agents will work tirelessly with their law enforcement partners to bring those responsible to justice. The dedicated work of Postal Service employees should never be overshadowed by those who compromise their integrity for personal gain. The USPS OIG is thankful for the great relationships we have developed with our law enforcement partners and with the District of Massachusetts U.S. Attorney's Office," said Matthew Modafferi, Special Agent in Charge of the United States Postal Service Office of Inspector General, Northeast Area Field Office.

"Jamesa Rankins violated the public trust placed in her as a U.S. Postal Service employee by fraudulently collecting unemployment insurance while she was employed by the U.S. Postal Service. Rankins stole taxpayer funds intended for those Americans who lost their job due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to investigate these types of allegations," stated Jonathan Mellone, Special Agent-in-Charge, Northeast Region, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General.

Rankins began working for USPS around 2016, most recently as a Sales & Service Distribution Associate at the Montello Post Office in Brockton. In this role, Rankins had the ability to generate postal money orders, including replacement money orders. During the relevant period, customers could obtain replacement money orders without paying any additional fees if the original money orders were lost, damaged or erroneous. Rankins issued over \$90,000 worth of replacement money orders to another individual where the original money orders were not erroneous and had not been lost or stolen. On at least one occasion, Rankins personally negotiated one of the replacement money orders at a check cashing business.

Rankins also applied for and obtained unemployment assistance from the Massachusetts Division of Unemployment Assistance despite being employed by USPS and thus being ineligible to receive unemployment assistance.

The charge of theft of government money provides a sentence of up to 10 years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. The charge of wire fraud provides for a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and statutes which govern the determination of a sentence in a criminal case.

Acting U.S. Attorney Levy, USPS OIG SAC Modafferi and DOL OIG SAC Mellone made the announcement today. Assistant U.S. Attorney Eugenia M. Carris, Deputy Chief of the Public Corruption & Special Prosecutions Unit and Assistant U.S. Attorney Evan Panich of the Criminal Division are prosecuting the case.

*Updated November 1, 2023*

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**PUBLIC CORRUPTION**

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