

PRESS RELEASE

Worcester Man Sentenced for Drug Offense and Wire Fraud

Wednesday, November 22, 2023

For Immediate Release

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

Defendant used personal identifying information of over 50 individuals to submit approximately 125 fraudulent claims for unemployment benefits

BOSTON – A Worcester man was sentenced today in federal court in Worcester for possessing cocaine intended for distribution and wire fraud with respect to COVID-19 relief programs.

Augustus "Bobo" Kormah, 33, was sentenced by U.S. Senior District Court Judge Timothy S. Hillman to 131 months in prison and three years of supervised release. Kormah was also ordered to pay restitution and forfeiture of \$258,705. In June 2023, Kormah pleaded guilty to one count of possession with intent to distribute cocaine and two counts of wire fraud.

On Sept. 11, 2020, Kormah was arrested following a suspected drug transaction. Following his arrest, a search of Kormah's apartment resulted in the seizure of approximately 26 grams of cocaine, an un-serialized Polymer 80 9mm firearm and a black magazine loaded with 30 9mm cartridges.

A subsequent investigation revealed that, between approximately May and October 2020, Kormah used the personal identifying information of over 50 individuals to submit approximately 125 fraudulent claims for COVID-19 unemployment benefits as well as 15 fraudulent claims for COVID-19 small business loans. As a result of the fraud scheme, Kormah obtained approximately \$100,000 in fraudulent unemployment benefits and approximately \$170,000 in fraudulent small business loans.

Acting United States Attorney Joshua S. Levy; James M. Ferguson Special Agent in Charge of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives, Boston Field Division;

Andrew Murphy, Special Agent in Charge of the United States Secret Service, Boston Field Office; Jonathan Mellone, Special Agent in Charge of Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General; and Worcester Police Chief Paul B. Saucier made the announcement. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Lucy Sun of the Criminal Division and Danial Bennett of the Worcester Branch Office prosecuted the case.

This case is part of Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN), a program bringing together all levels of law enforcement and the communities they serve to reduce violent crime and gun violence, and to make our neighborhoods safer for everyone. On May 26, 2021, the Department launched a violent crime reduction strategy strengthening PSN based on these core principles: fostering trust and legitimacy in our communities, supporting community-based organizations that help prevent violence from occurring in the first place, setting focused and strategic enforcement priorities, and measuring the results.

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