

PRESS RELEASE

Amsterdam Woman and Las Vegas Man Charged in Pandemic Fraud Conspiracy

Monday, September 30, 2024

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Northern District of New York

ALBANY, NEW YORK – Jodi Drygula, age 52, of Amsterdam, New York, and Anthony Camou, age 45, of Las Vegas, Nevada, have been indicted on mail fraud and conspiracy to commit mail fraud charges for fraudulently obtaining pandemic-related unemployment insurance benefits in the names of other people.

United States Attorney Carla B. Freedman; Jonathan Mellone, Special Agent in Charge, Northeast Region, United States Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General (USDOL-OIG); Ketty Larco-Ward, Inspector in Charge of the Boston Division of the United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS); and Lucy Lang, New York State Inspector General (NYS-OIG), made the announcement.

Drygula appeared on August 27, 2024, before United States Magistrate Christian F. Hummel in Albany, and Camou appeared on September 13, 2024, before United States Magistrate Daniel J. Albrechts in the District of Nevada; both defendants were ordered released with conditions.

The indictment alleges that from July 2020 through September 2021, Drygula and Camou fraudulently obtained unemployment insurance benefits from the New York State Department of Labor ("NYSDOL") in the names of three people. As a result of their conspiracy, which included additional fraudulent applications for unemployment insurance benefits, Drygula and Camou defrauded the NYSDOL out of more than \$250,000. The charges in the indictment are merely accusations. The defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proved guilty.

The mail fraud and conspiracy charges carry a maximum term of 20 years in prison, a fine of up to \$250,000, and a term of supervised release of up to 3 years. A defendant's sentence is imposed by a judge based on the particular statute the defendant is charged with violating, the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, and other factors.

The case is being investigated by USDOL-OIG, USPIS, and NYS-OIG, with assistance from the New York State Department of Labor. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Matthew M. Paulbeck and Joshua R. Rosenthal are 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 (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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