

PRESS RELEASE

Trio Sentenced to Federal Prison for Stealing \$520,910 in Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Funds

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For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Southern District of Indiana

INDIANAPOLIS- Three men have been sentenced to federal prison for their roles in a COVID-19 fraud scheme that resulted in the theft of \$520,910 in unemployment benefits from various state and federal unemployment programs.

Defendant	Charges	Sentence
Kamaldeen Karaole, 24, Indianapolis	Aggravated identity theft; Conspiracy to commit access device fraud; Access device fraud.	4 years, 3 months' imprisonment; 2 years of supervised release
Stephen Olamigoke, 23, Nigeria.	Conspiracy to commit access device fraud; Access device fraud.	2.5 years' imprisonment; 2 years of supervised release
Johnson Omodusunu, 24, Indianapolis	Conspiracy to commit access device fraud; Access device fraud.	2 years' imprisonment; 2 years of supervised release

Each defendant was also ordered to pay \$520,910 in restitution. At the time Stephen Olamigoke entered his guilty plea, he acknowledged that upon completion of his sentence, he will be subject to removal from the United States

According to court documents, between August and October 2020, the defendants stole 168 Unemployment Insurance (UI) debit cards and associated PIN numbers. These cards, issued by the states of California, Arizona, and Nevada, were being periodically loaded

with benefits. None of the cards belonged to the members of the conspiracy—they were all in the names of other real individuals. To obtain the cards, other members of the conspiracy located outside the United States had used stolen personally identifiable information to file numerous false unemployment claims with various state workforce agencies.

Unemployment Insurance is a joint state and federal program that provides temporary financial assistance to workers who are unemployed through no fault of their own.

The trio used 98 of the cards to withdraw cash from various ATMs in and around Indianapolis, often making multiple withdrawals within the span of just a few minutes. In total, they completed 529 withdrawals, stealing \$520,910 in benefits.

These funds were intended to support individuals unemployed during the COVID-19 pandemic. During this time, several federal programs expanded UI eligibility and benefits, including the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Program, Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation, and the Lost Wages Assistance Program.

“Stealing unemployment benefits meant to help people survive during one of the worst crises in modern history is both heartless and criminal,” said Tom Wheeler, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Indiana. “These defendants exploited a system designed to support those in genuine need, and now they are being held accountable for their greed thanks to the diligent work of our federal partners and prosecutor.”

“As the primary federal law enforcement agency charged with investigating fraud against the unemployment insurance program, the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General is committed to relentlessly protecting the integrity of this vital benefit program from those seeking to unlawfully enrich themselves at the expense of American workers. We are grateful to the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of Indiana for their strong partnership and collaboration. We will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to aggressively investigate these types of allegations,” said Megan Howell, Special Agent-in-Charge, Great Lakes Region, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General.

“Investigating and bringing to justice those who commit fraud against essential government programs is one of the many things we do as postal inspectors,” said Acting Inspector in Charge Felicia George, of the United States Postal Inspection Service - Detroit Division. “Crimes like this not only deprive real people of critical aid, but also threaten the integrity of the U.S. Mail, which so many Americans rely on for secure and timely delivery of vital benefits. This case is an outstanding example of collaborative efforts between federal agencies and the U.S. Attorney’s Office, working side by side to

protect public resources and ensure assistance reaches the individuals and families who truly need it."

"These defendants shamelessly exploited a national crisis for personal gain, stealing money intended to keep struggling families afloat - families counting on those funds to keep a roof over their heads and food on the table during desperate times," said FBI Indianapolis Special Agent in Charge Timothy J. O'Malley. "The FBI and our law enforcement partners remain unwavering in our commitment to hold accountable anyone who exploits government relief programs and to safeguard public funds from fraud."

The Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Department of Labor-Office of Inspector General, and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service investigated this case. The sentence was imposed by U.S. District Judge James Patrick Hanlon.

U.S. Attorney Wheeler thanked Assistant U.S. Attorney Matthew B. Miller, who prosecuted this case.

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