

**PRESS RELEASE**

# **Detroit Pleads Guilty in \$16M Federal Student Aid Fraud Scheme**

Wednesday, May 6, 2026

**For Immediate Release**

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

**DETROIT** - Brandon Robinson, 42, of Detroit, pleaded guilty today to wire fraud and aggravated identity theft in connection with a decade-long, multi-million-dollar Federal Student Aid fraud scheme, announced United States Attorney Jerome Gorgon, Jr.

Gorgon was joined in the announcement by Special Agent in Charge John Woolley, U.S. Department of Education Office of Inspector General (DOE-OIG), and Anthony P. D'Esposito, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General.

According to the court records, Robinson was responsible for leading a years-long scheme to obtain fraudulent Federal Student Aid benefits involving so-called "straw students" who were enrolled for the primary purpose of receiving FSA. Specifically, between January 2015 and February 2024, Robinson submitted fraudulent FSA claims for more than 1,200 individuals, involving over 100 schools in 24 states. As a result of the scheme, Robinson fraudulently caused more than \$16M in FSA benefits to be awarded, with more than \$10M disbursed. Robinson also accepted responsibility for filing over 100 fraudulent unemployment insurance claims between April 2020 and March 2023, causing the disbursement of over \$1M in UI benefits.

Robinson pleaded guilty before United States District Judge Laurie J. Michelson. Sentencing is scheduled for September 1, 2026, where Robinson faces a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison on the wire fraud count, followed by a mandatory, consecutive penalty of 24 months for the aggravated identity theft count.

In a related case, co-conspirator Antonio Robinson and Joshuan Porter also pleaded guilty, for their roles in the same scheme. That case is also assigned to Judge Laurie J. Michelson and they will be sentenced on July 7, 2026 (Antonio Robinson), and August 4, 2026 (Joshuan Porter). Both face a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison.

United States Attorney Gorgon stated, "More than 1,000 fake students. A decade of fraud. This man built an industrial-scale operation to loot federal student aid programs and to steal from the American taxpayer."

"Scams like this steal money from hardworking taxpayers and legitimate students and that is unacceptable," said John Woolley, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Department of Education Office of Inspector General Central Regional Office. "The OIG and our law enforcement partners are committed to fighting student aid fraud and we will continue to aggressively pursue those that participate in these types of crimes."

"Brandon Robinson's guilty plea sends a clear message: if you steal from programs meant to help hardworking Americans, our team and Vice President Vance's Task Force to Eliminate Fraud — will find you, investigate you, and hold you accountable," said Anthony P. D'Esposito, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General. "Protecting the integrity of the unemployment insurance system remains one of my top priorities. Fraud is a tax on every honest American, and we will continue aggressively pursuing the bad actors who exploit taxpayer-funded programs for personal gain."

The Department of Justice has created the National Fraud Enforcement Division. The core mission of the Fraud Division is to zealously investigate and prosecute those who steal or fraudulently misuse taxpayer dollars. Department of Justice efforts to combat fraud support President Trump's Task Force to Eliminate Fraud, a whole-of-government effort chaired by Vice President J.D. Vance to eliminate fraud, waste, and abuse within Federal benefit programs.

The case was jointly investigated by agents from the Department of Education Office of the Inspector General and the Department of Labor Office of the Inspector General, with assistance from the Federal Bureau of Investigation. It is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Ryan A. Particka and John K. Neal.

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