

PRESS RELEASE

Member Of Violent Gang in Pontiac Sentenced to 94 Months in Federal Prison for Aggravated Identity Theft and Possession of A Machinegun

Wednesday, September 27, 2023

For Immediate Release

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

DETROIT – Immanuel Gates, 21, of Southfield, MI, was sentenced in federal court in Detroit today to 94 months in federal prison for illegal possession of a machine gun and aggravated identity theft, announced United States Attorney Dawn N. Ison. Gates was a member of the violent R Block street gang, which was active in the city of Pontiac.

Ison was joined in the announcement by Irene Lindow, Special Agent-in-Charge, Great Lakes Region, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General and James Deir, Special Agent in Charge, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

According to court records, Gates stole over \$400,000 from at least four different states, in an unemployment insurance fraud scheme. Gates used personal identifying information of victims to assume their identities and fraudulently apply for unemployment in Michigan, Rhode Island, Arizona, and California. Gates used addresses in Pontiac MI, Waterford MI, and Ventura CA to perpetrate this fraud. Gates engaged in approximately \$413,114 of unemployment insurance fraud.

Gates used some of the money he fraudulently obtained to purchase firearms. In a single day, Gates spent at least \$3,273 of his fraud proceeds to purchase four firearms. Two of those firearms were subsequently used in shootings in Pontiac. Gates also transferred at least \$7,950 to a straw purchaser who purchased firearms on his behalf. The straw purchaser has pleaded guilty in federal court.

Gates also purchased over thirty Glock conversion devices, commonly called “switches” from a Russian website. A Glock conversion device converts a semi-automatic pistol into a fully automatic firearm. Gates spent no less than \$14,700.00 on guns and Glock conversion devices between October of 2020 and September of 2021.

“This prosecution and sentence reflect my office’s commitment, to hold accountable those relative few individuals who drive violence in our communities,” stated United States Attorney Dawn Ison. “And make no mistake, those who supply guns for others to use illegally are driving violence and will face federal prosecution.”

“Today’s significant sentence sends a strong message to dangerous street gangs that the law enforcement community will use every available tool to ensure the safety of our communities. Immanuel Gates engaged in an egregious scheme to obtain more than \$400,000 in unemployment insurance funds by using stolen identities to file fraudulent claims. Gates used the proceeds of his fraudulent activities to purchase machine gun switches, which turn handguns into automatic weapons” said Irene Lindow, Special Agent-in-Charge, Great Lakes Region, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General. “We are grateful to the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Eastern District of Michigan, the ATF, and our other federal, state, and local law enforcement partners for their strong partnership and collaboration on these types of investigations.”

This case was investigated by special agent of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General. This case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Matthew Roth.

Updated September 27, 2023

Topics

FIREARMS OFFENSES

IDENTITY THEFT

Component

[USAO - Michigan, Eastern](#)