

Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
District of Connecticut

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**New York Woman Sentenced to Prison for Operating
Unemployment Benefits Fraud Scheme**

Deirdre M. Daly, United States Attorney for the District of Connecticut, announced that THERESA A. FREEMAN, 65, last residing in Yonkers, N.Y., was sentenced today by U.S. District Judge Janet Bond Arterton in New Haven to 18 months of imprisonment, followed by three years of supervised release, for defrauding unemployment insurance programs in a “fictitious employer scheme.”

According to court documents and statements made in court, FREEMAN filed incorporation paperwork with the State of Connecticut for “Tribal Organic Products,” which she claimed was an internet business that she operated from an address in Trumbull, Connecticut. The business was, in fact, a fictitious company that did not engage in any business activity. In December 2012, FREEMAN’s son, Sean E. Montiero, filed a claim with the Connecticut Department of Labor for unemployment insurance benefits, claiming that he was laid off from Tribal Organic Products. Between January 2013 and July 2013, Montiero received approximately \$13,474 in unemployment insurance benefits from the State of Connecticut.

The investigation revealed that FREEMAN also operated similar fictitious employer schemes that defrauded both the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industries and the North Carolina Department of Commerce, Division of Employment Security of \$16,253 and \$14,136, respectively.

Judge Arterton ordered FREEMAN to pay restitution in the amount of \$43,863.

FREEMAN has been detained since her arrest on May 5, 2016. On September 20, 2016, she pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud.

FREEMAN has a prior federal conviction in the District of South Carolina for mail fraud stemming from similar conduct. In that case, she was found to have committed the same unemployment benefits fraud offense in South Carolina, Connecticut, Hawaii, Florida and New York, and was sentenced to 15 months of imprisonment.

Montiero has pleaded guilty and awaits sentencing.

This investigation was conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor – Office of Inspector General; Connecticut Department of Labor; Office of the Chief State’s Attorney; Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industries; North Carolina Department of Commerce, Division of Employment Security; and the Yonkers Police Department.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Deborah R. Slater.