

Press Release

Queens Couple Sentenced for \$380,000 COVID Unemployment Fraud Conspiracy

Friday, September 20, 2024

For Immediate Release

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

William Taylor and Patricia Clarke Stole Unemployment Benefits in 20 New Yorker's Names

ALBANY, NEW YORK – William Taylor, age 33, of Jamaica, New York, was sentenced to serve 36 months' imprisonment for aggravated identity theft and conspiring with his girlfriend, Patricia Clarke, to commit mail and wire fraud. Clarke, 27, also of Jamaica, was also sentenced to 12 months' and one day imprisonment for the conspiracy.

United States Attorney Carla B. Freedman; U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, Northeast Region (USDOL-OIG) Special Agent in Charge Jonathan Mellone; Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), Buffalo, New York Field Office Special Agent in Charge Matthew Scarpino; U.S. Postal Inspection Service, Boston Division (USPIS) Postal Inspector in Charge Ketty Larco-Ward; and New York State Inspector General (NYSIG) Lucy Lang made the announcement.

Taylor and Clarke used stolen identities to fraudulently obtain pandemic unemployment insurance benefits from the New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL). They used the names, dates of birth, and social security numbers of at least 20 individuals to submit claims to NYSDOL. Based on those false claims, NYSDOL wired funds directly to accounts controlled by Taylor, Clarke, or both; and NYSDOL directed bank cards to be mailed to the addresses directed by Taylor and Clarke. In total, NYSDOL paid \$381,815 on the claims submitted by Taylor and Clarke under the stolen identities.

United States District Judge Mae A. D'Agostino also ordered both defendants repay \$381,815 in restitution to NYSDOL; Taylor to forfeit \$315,723 in criminal proceeds; and Clarke to forfeit \$66,092 in criminal proceeds. Judge D'Agostino also sentenced both defendants to 2 years' supervised release.

USDOL-OIG, HSI, USPIS, and NYSIG investigated the case, which Assistant U.S. Attorney Jonathan S. Reiner prosecuted.

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