

PRESS RELEASE

Southfield Man First to Plead Guilty to \$28,000,000 Cell Fraud Conspiracy

Wednesday, December 6, 2023

For Immediate Release

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

DETROIT -- A Southfield man pleaded guilty today to conspiracy to commit wire fraud, in connection with an extensive, multi-million-dollar cell phone upgrade fraud scheme, announced United States Attorney Dawn N. Ison.

Ison was joined in the announcement by Angie M. Salazar, Special Agent in Charge, Department of Homeland Security, Homeland Security Investigations.

Delano Bush, 34, entered his guilty plea this afternoon, before United States District Judge Terrence G. Berg.

According to court records, beginning at least as early as June 2017 and continuing through at least September 2019, the defendant and others fraudulently obtained the personally identifiable information (PII) of other people to purchase cellular devices on credit, by charging those devices to accounts opened in the names of ID-theft victims, without the victims' authorization. In total, the scheme involved more than 26,000 fraudulent transactions and resulted in a loss of more than \$28,000,000.

"Today's guilty plea marks a significant event in a years-long investigation and prosecution. As this case shows, identity theft is constantly evolving, and fraudsters continue to find new ways to use and abuse their victims' personal information," said U.S. Attorney Ison. "My office remains committed to unraveling sophisticated fraud schemes such as this one, and to bringing the perpetrators of these schemes to justice."

"Cooperation between federal, state and local partners is essential to successfully investigating and prosecuting these complex fraud operations," said HSI Detroit Special Agent in Charge Angie M. Salazar. "By putting a stop to these schemes, HSI special

agents and our partners help protect the livelihoods of hard-working Americans both here in Michigan and across the country.”

Bush faces a statutory maximum penalty of 20 years imprisonment on the charge of conspiracy to commit wire fraud. Bush’s plea agreement also requires him to pay restitution to AT&T in the minimum amount of \$1,500,000. Sentencing is set for April 25, 2024.

The case was investigated by agents from Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), with assistance from the Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General (SSA-OIG), the Department of Labor Office of the Inspector General (DOL-OIG), the Detroit Metro Airport Police Department, the Taylor Police Department, and the Wayne State University Police Department. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Ryan A. Particka.

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