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Staten Island Man Indicted In Attempted \$3.2 Million Unemployment Fraud Scheme

Defendant Deji Adetimirin allegedly submitted 170 fraudulent unemployment insurance applications using stolen identities*

Staten Island, N.Y. – Richmond County District Attorney Michael E. McMahon today announced that a Staten Island man has been indicted for allegedly using stolen identities in attempt to steal \$3.2 million in unemployment insurance benefits. As a result of the defendant's scheme, NYS DOL approved 44 claims of the 170 fraudulent applications that had been allegedly submitted by the defendant, authorizing the release of more than \$229,000 in unemployment payments. Further investigation revealed that the defendant allegedly stole an additional \$30,000 by using other stolen identities from around the country to claim unemployment benefits, then laundering those funds through the purchase of money orders. Additionally, during the same time period, the defendant also received assistance through Section 8 (HUD) in which he allegedly falsified the recertification applications of 2020 and 2021, paying zero rent for those years as a result.

District Attorney Michael E. McMahon said, "This defendant allegedly used the identities of 170 unknowing victims to file false claims in order to attempt to collect \$3.2 million in unemployment benefits. But my office's Economic Crimes Bureau was able to detect his alleged scheme and put an early end to it. While these funds are meant to provide relief for those struggling with financial hardships, this defendant only sought to enrich himself at a time when many were out of work due to the coronavirus pandemic. Sadly, unemployment insurance fraud remains a widespread problem throughout the country, and there must be collective action for more oversight and verification of claims in order to prevent hardworking Americans from falling victim to these scams. We will continue working with our partners at NYS DOL to vigorously investigate and prosecute unemployment insurance fraud at every turn."

District Attorney McMahon noted, "We encourage Staten Islanders to help us by reporting allegations of fraud. If you receive official communication from NYS DOL regarding unemployment benefits that you did not apply for, you may be a victim of fraud and identity theft. This has become prevalent on Staten Island and you should immediately report suspected unemployment fraud to NYS DOL or to my office."

New York State Department of Labor Commissioner Roberta Reardon said, “I thank Richmond County District Attorney Michael McMahon and our other law enforcement partners for joining us in our fight against Unemployment Insurance fraud. The Department of Labor continues to aggressively fight fraud and will pursue criminals to the fullest extent of the law. I applaud the incredible work by the members of our Office of Special Investigations for their role in this successful collaboration that prevented millions of dollars from falling into the wrong hands.”

Defendant Deji Adetimirin, 36, was arraigned today in Staten Island Supreme Court, St. George, on a 224-count indictment on charges including Attempted Grand Larceny in the First Degree, Identity Theft in the First Degree, Grand Larceny in the Second Degree, Attempted Criminal Possession of Stolen Property in the First Degree, Falsifying Business Records in the Second Degree, Money Laundering, and related charges. The defendant was placed on Supervised Release and his next court date is December 17.

Between March 9, 2020 and October 1, 2020, the defendant engaged in a scheme to obtain unemployment benefits by fraudulently filing applications using the names and social security numbers of 170 other people. RCDA’s Economic Crimes Bureau began investigating after receiving numerous complaints from Staten Island residents saying their names and personal information had been used without their knowledge to apply for unemployment benefits. Working with NYS DOL, RCDA investigators were able to identify numerous highly suspicious unemployment payouts being made to a single apartment where the defendant resides at 160 Park Hill Avenue. As a result of the defendant’s scheme, NYS DOL authorized the release of more than \$229,000 in unemployment payments to the defendant.

Additional information for reporting unemployment insurance fraud to NYS DOL can be found at **the NYS DOL UI Fraud & Identity Theft** website. Scams can also be reported directly to RCDA by calling the **SCAMS hotline at (718) 556-7226 (SCAM)** or contacting RCDA at: **reportscams@rcda.nyc.gov**. More information can also be found on the **RCDA website**.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Daniel Stern, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Jeffrey Curiale, Chief of the Economic Crimes Bureau. The case was investigated by RCDA’s Economic Crimes Bureau and the NYPD DA Detective Squad.

The charges contained in the indictment are merely allegations and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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