

# Massachusetts man pleads guilty to COVID-19 Pandemic unemployment, loan fraud

A Leicester man pleaded guilty yesterday in federal court in Worcester in connection with his involvement in loan and Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) fraud schemes.

William, Cordon, 26, pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud, four counts of wire fraud and four counts of aggravated identity theft. Cordon was initially indicted on April 1, 2021 and was subsequently charged in a superseding indictment with co-conspirator Destinee Snay on July 12, 2021.

Between May and October 2020, Cordon engaged in a fraudulent unemployment scheme by attempting to file numerous claims for unemployment with the State of Nevada by taking advantage of PUA funds made available due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Cordon filed the claims using the names, Social Security numbers and other personal identifying information of third parties for whom he had no legal authority to file such claims. The State of Nevada ultimately detected that the claims were fraudulent and did not approve the PUA funds.

Cordon also engaged in a second wire fraud scheme using stolen identities to fraudulently apply for COVID-19 Economic Injury Disaster loans made available by the Small Business Administration (SBA). Cordon used a third party's personal identifying information to obtain a loan from the SBA under false pretenses, and then used the fraudulent funds for his own enrichment, including to pay for plane tickets, hotel accommodations, restaurants, entertainment and shopping during a Florida vacation.

In May 2020, Cordon agreed to surrender to federal authorities

the balance of \$79,000 in his bank account that were proceeds of a separate unemployment fraud scheme in Massachusetts. This occurred before Cordor filed the fraudulent unemployment claim with Nevada in July 2020.

The charges of conspiracy to commit wire fraud and wire fraud each provide for a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, up to three years of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000. The charge of aggravated identity theft provides for a mandatory sentence of two years in prison to be served consecutively to another other sentenced imposed, one year of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

Acting United States Attorney Nathaniel R. Mendell; Jonathan Mellone, Special Agent in Charge of Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, Office of Investigations; and Frederick J. Regan, Special Agent in Charge of U.S. Secret Service, Boston Field Office made the announcement today. Valuable assistance in the case was provided by the Leicester and Marlboro Police Departments. Assistant U.S. Attorneys John T. Mulcahy of Mendell's Criminal Division and Danial Bennett of the Worcester Branch Office are prosecuting the case.

On May 17, 2021, the Attorney General established the COVID-19 Fraud Enforcement Task Force to marshal the resources of the Department of Justice in partnership with agencies across government to enhance efforts to combat and prevent pandemic-related fraud. The Task Force bolsters efforts to investigate and prosecute the most culpable domestic and international criminal actors and assists agencies tasked with administering relief programs to prevent fraud by, among other methods, augmenting and incorporating existing coordination mechanisms, identifying resources and techniques to uncover fraudulent actors and their schemes, and sharing and harnessing information and insights gained from prior enforcement efforts. For more information on the Department's response to

the pandemic, please visit  
<https://www.justice.gov/coronavirus>.

Anyone with information about allegations of attempted fraud involving COVID-19 can report it by calling the Department of Justice's National Center for Disaster Fraud (NCDF) Hotline at 866-720-5721 or via the NCDF Web Complaint Form at: <https://www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form>.

The details contained in the charging documents are allegations. The remaining defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.