

Undocumented Immigrant Sentenced for Stealing Citizen's Identity and Public Housing Benefits

An undocumented immigrant who refuses to disclose his true identity was sentenced today in federal court in Boston in connection with using another person's identity for over 40 years and stealing public funds under the victim's identity.

"John Doe" was sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge Douglas P. Woodlock to three years in prison and three years of supervised release. One of the conditions of supervision is that Doe disclose his true identity to his Probation Officer. Doe also was ordered to pay the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) \$16,762 in restitution. In June 2019, Doe was convicted by a federal jury of aggravated identity theft, using a passport obtained through false statements, stealing public funds and misuse of a Social Security number.

Doe has admitted to being in the United States for 50 years. Evidence at trial indicated that he is Dominican, but he refused to disclose his identity or nationality.

At some point prior to 1975, Doe obtained the birth certificate of a U.S. citizen from Puerto Rico. Initially, Doe did not have the victim's Social Security number, but subsequently created or obtained a counterfeit Social Security card bearing the name of the victim with a non-matching Social Security number assigned to a different person from Puerto Rico.

From 1975 to 1994, Doe used the counterfeit Social Security card to find employment, first in New York and later in Boston.

In 1994, Doe received a letter from the IRS notifying him that the name on his Social Security card did not match the Social Security number he was using, and that he needed to go to a local Social Security Administration (SSA) office to resolve the discrepancy. Doe took the letter to an SSA office in Boston, where he deceived an SSA employee into believing that he was really the victim and that he had forgotten his true Social Security number. Doe gave the employee the name, date of birth, place of birth, and parents' names on the victim's birth certificate without disclosing that the birth certificate was not Doe's. The employee entered this biographical information into the SSA computer, which returned a match for the victim's true Social Security number. Through this deception, Doe was able to obtain a Social Security card bearing the victim's true name and true Social Security Number.

Doe used this unlawfully obtained Social Security card for the next 18 years, until the victim's death in Puerto Rico in 2012. At that point, SSA learned that someone in Massachusetts was using a deceased person's Social Security number and began a fraud investigation.

Doe used the victim's SSN to work in Boston, obtain and travel on a U.S. passport, apply for Social Security benefits, obtain unemployment benefits, and obtain Section 8 public housing benefits for himself and his family. The jury convicted Doe of using a passport that he had obtained by falsely representing that the victim's Social Security number was his own; using the victim's Social Security number in support of his claim for unemployment benefits and in a sworn statement he gave SSA; and aggravated identity theft. Doe was also convicted of stealing public funds by using the victim's SSN to collect Section 8 benefits, which are paid by HUD.

United States Attorney Andrew E. Lelling; Jason Molina, Special Agent in Charge of Homeland Security Investigations in Boston; Scott Antolik, Special Agent in Charge of the Social

Security Administration, Office of Inspector General, Office of Investigations, Boston Field Division; William B. Gannon, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Department of State, Diplomatic Security Service, Boston Field Office; Michael Mikulka, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, Office of Investigations, Labor Racketeering and Fraud; and Christina Scaringi, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Inspector General, Northeast Regional Office, made the announcement today. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Christine Wichers and David Tobin of Lelling's Major Crimes Unit prosecuted the case.