



THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
SOUTHERN DISTRICT *of* FLORIDA

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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Southern District of Florida

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, February 1, 2022

South Florida Covid-19 Relief Fraudster Sentenced to Federal Prison

Miami, Florida – Today, a federal district judge in Fort Lauderdale sentenced Luke Pierre Jr., 36, of Port St. Lucie, Florida to 24 months' imprisonment for fraudulently obtaining over \$400,000 from the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), a program funded under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act to provide small businesses with financial relief during the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, Pierre must pay close to \$415,000 in restitution.

Pierre submitted a PPP loan application on behalf of his company, Most Wanted Bullyz LLC ("MWB"), a dog breeding business, in which he falsely represented that MWB had 21 employees and an average monthly payroll of \$165,870. In reality, MWB had no employees and no monthly employee payroll. Pierre gave a large portion of the fraudulent loan proceeds he received to co-conspirators who helped obtain the loan, including one such payment of over \$100,000 that was disguised in bank records as "stud fees."

Pierre previously pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit wire fraud. U.S. District Judge William P. Dimitrouleas imposed Pierre's sentence.

Juan Antonio Gonzalez, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Florida; Kenneth A. Polite Jr., Assistant Attorney General of the Justice Department's Criminal Division; and George L. Piro, Special Agent in Charge, FBI Miami, announced the sentence.

FBI Miami investigated this case. IRS-Criminal Investigation, Miami Field Office assisted.

Assistant U.S. Attorney David A. Snider and Trial Attorney Philip Trout of the Fraud Section of the Department of Justice prosecuted the case. Assistant U.S. Attorney Nicole Grosnoff is handling asset forfeiture.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act is a federal law designed to provide emergency financial assistance to millions of Americans who suffered financially from the COVID-19 pandemic. One source of relief provided by the CARES Act was the authorization of hundreds of billions of dollars in forgivable loans to small businesses for job retention and certain other expenses through the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP).

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>.

Related court documents and information may be found on the website of the District Court for the Southern District of Florida at www.flsd.uscourts.gov or at <http://pacer.flsd.uscourts.gov>, under case number 21-cr-60288.

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Topic(s):

Coronavirus

Disaster Fraud

Component(s):

USAO - Florida, Southern

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