



THE UNITED STATES

Department of Justice

Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, September 10, 2020

NFL Player Charged for Role in \$24 Million COVID-Relief Fraud Scheme

NFL Player Fraudulently Obtained \$1.2 Million in Small Business Administration Paycheck Protection Program Loan

A National Football League (NFL) player has been charged for his alleged participation in a scheme to file fraudulent loan applications seeking more than \$24 million in forgivable Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans guaranteed by the Small Business Administration (SBA) under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

Acting Assistant Attorney General Brian C. Rabbitt of the Justice Department's Criminal Division, U.S. Attorney Ariana Fajardo Orshan of the Southern District of **Florida**, Special Agent in Charge Michael J. De Palma of the IRS-Criminal Investigation (CI) Miami Field Office, Special Agent in Charge George L. Piro of FBI's Miami Field Office, and Special Agent in Charge Kevin A. Kupperbusch of the U.S. SBA-Office of Inspector General (OIG), Investigations Division, Eastern Regional Office, made the announcement.

Joshua J. Bellamy, 31, of St. Petersburg, **Florida**, a player in the NFL, was charged in a federal criminal complaint filed in the Southern District of **Florida** with wire fraud, bank fraud, and conspiracy to commit wire fraud and bank fraud. Bellamy was arrested this morning and will appear today before U.S. Magistrate Judge Christopher Tuite of the Middle District of **Florida**.

The complaint alleges that Bellamy conspired with others to obtain millions of dollars in fraudulent PPP loans. Early in the scheme, Phillip J. Augustin allegedly obtained a fraudulent PPP loan for his talent management company using falsified documents. After submitting that application, Augustin then began to work with other co-conspirators, including Bellamy, on a scheme to submit numerous fraudulent PPP loan applications for confederate loan applicants, in order to receive kickbacks for obtaining the forgivable loans for them.

Bellamy is alleged to have obtained a PPP loan of \$1,246,565 for his own company, Drip Entertainment LLC. Bellamy allegedly purchased over \$104,000 in luxury goods using proceeds of his PPP loan, including purchases at Dior, Gucci, and jewelers. He is also alleged to have spent approximately \$62,774 in PPP loan proceeds at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino, and to have withdrawn over \$302,000. Bellamy also allegedly sought PPP loans on behalf of his family members and close associates.

The complaint alleges that the scheme involved the preparation of at least 90 fraudulent applications, most of which were submitted. Augustin, Bellamy, and other conspirators in the scheme are alleged to have applied for PPP loans that are together worth more than \$24 million dollars. Many of those loan applications were approved and funded by financial institutions, paying out at least \$17.4 million.

The other 10 defendants allegedly involved in this scheme whose complaints were previously unsealed are the following:

- Tiara Walker, 37, of Miami Gardens, Florida, was charged in a federal criminal complaint filed on Sept. 3, 2020, in the Southern District of Florida, with wire fraud, bank fraud, and conspiracy to commit wire fraud and bank fraud;
- Damion O. Mckenzie, 38, of Miami Gardens, Florida, was charged in a federal criminal complaint filed on Aug. 3, 2020, in the Southern District of Florida with wire fraud, bank fraud, and conspiracy to commit wire fraud and bank fraud;
- Andre M. Clark, 46, of Miramar, Florida, was charged in a federal criminal complaint filed on Aug. 3, 2020, in the Southern District of Florida with wire fraud, bank fraud, and conspiracy to commit wire fraud and bank fraud;
- Keyaira Bostic, 31, of Pembroke Pines, Florida, was charged in a federal criminal complaint filed on Aug. 3, 2020, in the Southern District of Florida with wire fraud, bank fraud, and conspiracy to commit wire fraud and bank fraud;
- Phillip J. Augustin, 51, of Coral Springs, Florida, was charged in a federal criminal complaint filed on July 28, 2020, in the Northern District of Ohio with wire fraud, bank fraud, conspiracy to commit wire fraud and bank fraud, and obstruction;
- Wyleia Nashon Williams, 44, of Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, was charged in a federal criminal complaint filed on July 28, 2020, in the Northern District of Ohio with wire fraud, bank fraud, and conspiracy to commit wire fraud and bank fraud;
- James R. Stote, 54, of Hollywood, Florida, was charged in a federal criminal complaint filed on June 24, 2020, in the Northern District of Ohio with wire fraud, bank fraud, and conspiracy to commit wire fraud and bank fraud;
- Ross Charno, 46, of Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, was charged in a federal criminal complaint filed on June 24, 2020, in the Northern District of Ohio with wire fraud, bank fraud, and conspiracy to commit wire fraud and bank fraud;
- Deon D. Levy, 50, of Bedford, Ohio, was charged in a federal complaint filed on June 8, 2020, in the Northern District of Ohio with wire fraud and conspiracy to commit wire fraud; and
- Abdul-Azeem Levy, 22, of Cleveland, Ohio was charged in a federal complaint filed on June 8, 2020, in the Northern District of Ohio with wire fraud and conspiracy to commit wire fraud.

The CARES Act is a federal law enacted on March 29, 2020, designed to provide emergency financial assistance to the millions of Americans who are suffering the economic effects caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. One source of relief provided by the CARES Act was the authorization of up to \$349 billion in forgivable loans to small businesses for job retention and certain other expenses, through the PPP. In April 2020, Congress authorized over \$300 billion in additional PPP funding.

The PPP allows qualifying small businesses and other organizations to receive loans with a maturity of two years and an interest rate of one percent. PPP loan proceeds must be used by businesses on payroll costs, interest on mortgages, rent, and utilities. The PPP allows the interest and principal to be entirely forgiven if the business spends the loan proceeds on these expense items within a designated period of time after receiving the proceeds and uses a certain amount of the PPP loan proceeds on payroll expenses.

A federal criminal complaint is merely an accusation. A defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

This case was investigated by the IRS-CI Miami and Cincinnati Field Offices, the FBI's Miami and Cleveland Field Offices, and the SBA-OIG. Trial Attorney Philip Trout of the Criminal Division's Fraud Section and Assistant U.S. Attorney David Turken for the Southern District of Florida are prosecuting the case. The Justice Department also acknowledges and thanks the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Ohio and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation Office of Inspector General for their assistance investigating this matter.

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 Hotline at 866-720-5721 or via the NCDF Web Complaint Form at: <https://www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form>.

The year 2020 marks the 150th anniversary of the Department of Justice. Learn more about the history of our agency at www.Justice.gov/Celebrating150Years.

Attachment(s):

[Download Bellamy Complaint](#)

Topic(s):

Coronavirus

Disaster Fraud

Component(s):

[Criminal Division](#)

[Criminal - Criminal Fraud Section](#)

[USAO - Florida, Southern](#)

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