



THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Southern District of Florida

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, August 28, 2020

Two Men Who Allegedly Used Synthetic Identities, Existing Shell Companies, and Prior Fraud Experience to Exploit Covid-19 Relief Programs Charged in Miami Federal Court

Miami, Fl. -- Federal prosecutors have charged two Florida residents with bank fraud conspiracy for allegedly using synthetic identities to commit crimes, including defrauding banks and stealing over \$3 million from Covid-19 relief programs.

Synthetic identities combine real (albeit stolen) identity information, such as stolen social security numbers, with fraudulent identity information, such as fake names and dates of birth. Criminals create these synthetic identities and use them to open fraudulent bank and credit card accounts, and to make fraudulent purchases.

Ariana Fajardo Orshan, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, Kyle A. Myles, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, Office of Inspector General – Investigations (FDIC-OIG), Atlanta Region, Brian Swain, Special Agent in Charge, United States Secret Service (USSS), Miami Field Office, Kevin A. Kupperbusch, Special Agent in Charge, U.S. Small Business Administration, Office of Inspector General (SBA-OIG), Investigations Division, Eastern Region, Rod Owens, Special Agent in Charge, Social Security Administration, Office of the Inspector General, Antonio J. Gomez, Inspector in Charge, U.S. Postal Inspection Service (USPIS), Miami Division, and James S. Jackson, Deputy Inspector General for Investigations, Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA) made the announcement.

According to the criminal complaint affidavit, beginning around 2017, **Jean Fleuridor**, 41, of Broward County, Florida and **Hasan Brown**, 44, of Miami-Dade County, Florida, and their co-conspirators were involved in a scheme to defraud a bank located in San Antonio, Texas. They used approximately 700 synthetic identities, in addition to stolen identities, to create bank accounts and shell companies. According to the criminal complaint, fraudulent payments were made from accounts registered to synthetic identities to accounts registered to defendants Brown and Fleuridor.

From about April through July of 2020, members of the conspiracy allegedly utilized the already-established synthetic identities and associated shell companies to fraudulently apply for assistance under the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), a program established under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security ("CARES") Act to help small businesses financially survive the pandemic. According to the complaint, the

defendants fraudulently sought and received over \$3 million dollars in PPP relief. This money was paid to companies registered to the synthetic identities.

Defendant Fleuridor had his initial appearance on August 26, 2020, and defendant Brown had his initial appearance on August 28, 2020, both before U.S. Magistrate Judge Alicia M. Otazo-Reyes. A copy of the criminal complaint and affidavit is attached to this release.

FDIC-OIG, USSS Miami, SBA-OIG, SSA-OIG, USPIS, and TIGTA are handling the investigation. Assistant U.S. Attorney Brooke Watson, of the Southern District of Florida, is prosecuting the case. Assistant U.S. Attorney Nicole S. Grosnof, also of the Southern District of Florida, is handling asset forfeiture. Trial Attorney Louis Manzo, from the Department of Justice, Criminal Division, Assistant U.S. Attorney Lauren Elbert, of the Eastern District of New York, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Trenton Reichling, of the Middle District of Florida, provided assistance.

In March 2020, the CARES Act was enacted. It was 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 time after receiving the proceeds and uses a certain amount of the PPP loan proceeds on payroll expenses.

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>.

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.

Related court documents and information appear 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 no. 20-mj-03472-AOR.

Attachment

Criminal complaint and affidavit

Topic(s):

Coronavirus

Financial Fraud

Component(s):

USAO - Florida, Southern

Updated September 1, 2020