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THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE  
NORTHERN DISTRICT *of* MISSISSIPPI

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**Department of Justice**

U.S. Attorney's Office

Northern District of Mississippi

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, May 14, 2021

## **Starkville Man Charged with more than \$6 million in COVID-Relief Fraud, False Statements and Money Laundering**

STARKVILLE, Miss. – A Starkville man was arrested Thursday by FBI Special Agents after being indicted by a federal grand jury on criminal charges related to his alleged fraud scheme exceeding \$6 million in federal COVID-19 Paycheck Protection Program loans.

According to court documents, Christopher Paul Lick, 45, of Starkville devised a scheme to defraud, and to obtain PPP funds, by filing false and fraudulent loan applications with banks providing loans as part of the Paycheck Protection Program, including Customers Bank and Cross River Bank. Lick is alleged to have overstated the number of employees and payroll expenses of his purported businesses to receive the funds.

Rather than use the PPP funds for his businesses, Lick is alleged to have purchased a variety of luxury items for personal use, including a home valued at more than \$1 million and a Tesla valued at nearly \$100,000. Lick also is alleged to have used the PPP funds to invest in the stock market.

Lick is charged with four counts of wire fraud, one count of false statements to a financial institution, and eleven counts of money laundering. He is scheduled for an initial court appearance today before U.S. Magistrate Judge David A. Sanders of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Mississippi. If convicted, he faces up to 30 years in federal prison.

The FBI's Oxford Resident Agency is investigating the case. Assistant U.S. Attorney Philip Levy is prosecuting the case.

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>.

*An indictment is merely an allegation and all defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.*

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**Topic(s):**

Coronavirus

Financial Fraud

**Component(s):**

USAO - Mississippi, Northern

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