



U.S. Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

**FRAUDSTER SENTENCED TO 30 MONTHS IN PRISON FOR STEALING
HOMELESS VICTIMS' IDENTITIES AND USING THEM TO APPLY FOR
UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS**

***Defendant Conspired with NYC Fraud Investigator to Steal Victim Information from
Department of Homeless Services Database and to Apply for Fraudulent Benefits***

Earlier today, in federal court in Brooklyn, Marc Lazarre was sentenced by United States District Judge Kiyo A. Matsumoto to a prison term of 30 months for conspiracy to commit wire fraud and aggravated identity theft as part of a scheme to steal the personal identifying information of homeless individuals and to use that stolen information to fraudulently apply for unemployment insurance benefits.

Joseph Nocella, Jr., United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York; Christopher G. Raia, Assistant Director in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, New York Field Office (FBI); and Jocelyn E. Strauber, Commissioner, New York City Department of Investigation (DOI), announced the sentence.

"The defendant exploited his relationship with a corrupt city employee to access vulnerable homeless victims' personal identifying information in an attempt to defraud a state agency," stated United States Attorney Nocella. "Exploiting positions of power for personal financial gain—or conspiring with public employees who abuse their positions of public trust—will be vigorously investigated and prosecuted."

"With the assistance of a corrupt city employee, Marc Lazarre misused restricted information to fraudulently obtain unemployment benefits using stolen identities of homeless individuals. This conspiracy not only violated and exploited a vulnerable population's privacy, but also deprived these victims of vital financial benefits. The FBI is committed to disrupting all

corrupt schemes that target our city’s financial assistance programs and profit at the expense of defenseless victims,” stated FBI Assistant Director in Charge Raia.

DOI Commissioner Jocelyn E. Strauber stated: “This defendant participated in a fraudulent scheme to unlawfully obtain the personal information of homeless New Yorkers and steal public benefits to which he was not entitled and today he faces the consequences of his conduct. I thank the United States Attorney’s Office for the Eastern District of New York and the FBI for their continued partnership in protecting public funds and holding accountable those who drain critical resources intended for New York’s most vulnerable.”

In the fall of 2020, Lazarre conspired with co-defendant Olabanji Otufale, a fraud investigator with the New York City Department of Homeless Services, to steal the personal identifying information of homeless individuals and to use that stolen information to fraudulently apply for unemployment insurance benefits in the names of those homeless individuals without their knowledge or consent.

Otufale used his access to a Department of Homeless Services database to commit fraud. He stole the personal identifying information—names, social security numbers, and dates of birth—of vulnerable victims who had given that personal information to the Department of Homeless Services when they applied for social services. Otufale then texted this information to Lazarre, who applied online for unemployment benefits in the names of the homeless victims. Otufale was previously sentenced by Judge Matsumoto to 27 months’ imprisonment.

The government’s case is being handled by the Office’s Public Integrity Section. Assistant United States Attorneys Sara K. Winik, Laura Zuckerwise, and Katherine P. Onyshko are in charge of the prosecution.

The Defendant:

MARC LAZARRE
Age: 40
Secaucus, New Jersey

Defendant Previously Sentenced:

OLABANJI OTUFALE
Age: 42
Brooklyn, New York

E.D.N.Y. Docket No. 24-CR-170 (KAM)