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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

District of Maryland

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, June 2, 2022

Virginia Woman Sentenced to 54 Months in Federal Prison for Identity Theft Scheme and Ordered to Pay \$4.4 Million Dollars in Restitution

Baltimore, Maryland – Yesterday U.S. District Judge George J. Hazel sentenced Janet Sturmer, age 66, of Manassas, Virginia to 54 months in federal prison, followed by 3 years of supervised release, for conspiracy to commit mail, wire fraud, and aggravated identity theft. As part of her guilty plea, Sturmer will be required to pay \$4.4 million in restitution.

The sentence was announced by United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Erik L. Barron; Special Agent in Charge Christopher Dillard of the Department of Defense, Office of Inspector General, Defense Criminal Investigative Service - Mid-Atlantic Field Office; and Acting Special Agent in Charge Selwyn Smith of Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Baltimore.

According to her plea agreement, from October 2015 to March 2017, Sturmer conspired with Peter Unakalu, Khalid Razaq, Brandon Ross, Saulina Eady, Saul Eady, and others to commit wire fraud by posing as navy contracted agents and convincing victim companies that conspiracy members were authorized to order specialized communications equipment without prior payment.

As part of the scheme to defraud, Sturmer and her co-conspirators used fictitious identities, fictitious business names, and the stolen identities of real individuals to lease facilities and receive fraudulently obtained goods. For example, in September 2016, Sturmer and Razaq submitted a commercial lease agreement and tenant information sheet using the name, date of birth, driver's license, and social security number of Victim 1 without the victim's permission or knowledge. Ultimately, Razaq and Sturmer used this rental property to obtain high-end smartphones and tablets from a victim company. Sturmer and Razaq subsequently shipped the fraudulently obtained goods to California where the products were either disposed of or sold.

Additionally, in October 2016, Sturmer rented office space located in Chantilly, Virginia for the purpose of receiving fraudulently obtained goods including, thousands of flat screen televisions and communications equipment from two victim companies. To do so, Sturmer used the stolen identity of Victim 2 and a fraudulent tax return created by Razaq. Razaq then arranged for the fraudulently obtained televisions to

various store locations that Sturmer and Razaq rented using stolen identities. On one occasion, Sturmer shipped approximately 100 stolen flat screens to Ross (a co-conspirator) in California.

As stated in her guilty plea, law enforcement executed a search warrant at Sturmer's Virginia residence. Amongst other items, law enforcement recovered stolen flat screen televisions from one victim company, cables from another victim company, shipping records, a notebook documenting the receipt and storage of stolen flat screen televisions, counterfeit identification documents in the names of real victims, at least five cell phones, and counterfeit device-making equipment.

Based on the search warrant results, surveillance footage, and business records, Sturmer and her co-conspirators caused a loss of more than \$4.4 million to victim companies.

Co-defendants Khalid Razaq, Saul Eady, Saulina Eady, and Brandon Ross, were sentenced to 5 years, 4 years, 30 months, and 18 months in federal prison; respectively. As part of their sentencing, Razaq was ordered to pay over \$4 million in restitution and Ross was ordered to pay \$1.5 million in restitution. Troy Barbour is scheduled to be sentenced at a later date.

United States Attorney Ereik L. Barron praised the DOD-OIG and HSI for their work on the investigation. Mr. Barron thanked the FBI, the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Industry and Security, Office of Export Enforcement, the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, and Customs and Border Protection for their work in the investigation. Mr. Barron thanked Assistant U.S. Attorneys Joseph R. Baldwin and Adam K. Ake, who prosecuted the case.

For more information on the Maryland U.S. Attorney's Office, its priorities, and resources available to help the community, please visit <https://www.justice.gov/usao-md/community-outreach>.

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Topic(s):

Financial Fraud
Identity Theft

Component(s):

USAO - Maryland

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