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PRESS RELEASE

Four Defendants Charged in Multi-Million Dollar National Coronavirus Fraud Ring

Tuesday, November 1, 2022

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For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, District of South Carolina

COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA — Four defendants have been charged in the District of South Carolina for their alleged roles in a fraud scheme related to the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act's Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) that involved nearly a hundred individuals from across the country, including Texas, North Carolina, and South Carolina.

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The indicted defendants are

- Jacob Liticker, a/k/a “Jay Stunna,” 25, from Houston, Texas;
- Kehinde Mubarak Ladepo, 26, an enlisted member of the United States Air Force stationed at Shaw Air Force Base in Sumter;
- Ganiyu Victor Ladepo, a/k/a “Victor,” 29, from Fayetteville, North Carolina; and
- and Maxwell Uzoma Okobi, a/k/a “Maxi,” 24, a resident of North Carolina currently deployed to Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

The indictment alleges that the defendants were part of a national scheme, led by Liticker, that attempted to fraudulently acquire \$2 million in PPP loans, and that did fraudulently acquire nearly \$1 million in PPP loans. The PPP loan program was administered by the Small Business Administration (SBA) and provided forgivable loans to small businesses for job retention and certain other expenses. According to the indictment, Liticker created false PPP loan applications for nearly 100 people across the country, typically for amounts around \$20,000, and would assist those individuals in submitting this false information to SBA-approved lenders. In doing so, he would often create false tax documentation to support the non-existent businesses. In exchange for his services, Liticker would receive a portion of the PPP loan proceeds. The indictment alleges that Liticker would also assist in getting the loans forgiven.

“PPP loans were finite funds designed to help businesses stay afloat amid unprecedented times and extraordinary challenges. Every dollar wrongly taken from this taxpayer-funded program was a dollar that could not go to a legitimate business in need,” said U.S. Attorney Adair F. Boroughs. “This Office takes pandemic-related crime seriously and stands ready prosecute fraud related to the Coronavirus in all its forms. This case highlights those efforts.”

“The Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI) is dedicated to protecting the integrity of the government's pandemic-related resources from abuse,” said Special Agent in Charge Nicholas J. Groesbeck, OSI Procurement Fraud Detachment 4, Wright-Patterson AFB, OH. “AFOSI and our joint law enforcement partners will continue the fight against fraud, which impacts legitimate smalls business that these programs are designed to support while ensuring those who violate the law are held accountable.

“These arrests are representative of the Defense Criminal Investigative Service’s (DCIS) steadfast commitment to hold accountable those who perpetrate fraud against the Department of Defense, even when those perpetrators are within the ranks of the Armed Forces,” said Special Agent in Charge Chris Dillard, Department of Defense Inspector General, DCIS Mid-Atlantic Field Office. “DCIS and our partner agencies are dedicated to protecting the integrity of government programs as well as defending the Department of Defense's long standing traditions and values of honesty and integrity.”

Each defendant faces a maximum penalty of imprisonment of up to 20 years, fines, and restitution.

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On May 17, 2021, the Attorney General established the COVID-19 Fraud Enforcement Task Force to marshal the resources of the Department of Justice in partnership with agencies across government to enhance efforts to combat and prevent pandemic-related fraud. The Task Force bolsters efforts to investigate and prosecute the most culpable domestic and international criminal actors and assists agencies tasked with administering relief programs to prevent fraud by, among other methods, augmenting and incorporating existing coordination mechanisms, identifying resources and techniques to uncover fraudulent actors and their schemes, and sharing and harnessing information and insights gained from prior enforcement efforts. For more information on the Department's response to the pandemic, please visit <https://www.justice.gov/coronavirus>.

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

The case was investigated by the Air Force Office of Special Investigations, Defense Criminal Investigative Service, the U.S. Secret Service, and SBA's Office of Inspector General. Assistant U.S. Attorney Derek A. Shoemake, who also serves as the Office's Coronavirus Fraud Coordinator, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Winston Marosek are prosecuting the case. A copy of the indictment and a copy of the chart illustrating the scope of the alleged scheme are attached.

U.S. Attorney Boroughs stated that all charges in the indictment are merely accusations and that defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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[liticker indictment.pdf](#)

[liticker chart.pdf](#)

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