

THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
WESTERN DISTRICT *of* NORTH CAROLINA

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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Western District of North Carolina

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, December 16, 2020

Charlotte Man Is Charged For COVID-19 Relief Loan Fraud

The Defendant was on Federal Supervised Release at the Time of the Alleged Offense

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – A federal grand jury sitting in Charlotte returned a criminal indictment today charging Bryon Jones, 55, of Charlotte, with submitting a fraudulent loan application for COVID-19 economic assistance that resulted in the disbursement of \$142,900 in federal emergency relief funds.

Tommy D. Coke, Inspector in Charge of the Atlanta Division of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, which oversees Charlotte, joins U.S. Attorney Murray in making today's announcement.

"At a time our nation is grappling with the effects of the coronavirus pandemic and businesses are struggling to cope with the impact of COVID, swindlers are seizing the opportunity to pilfer federal economic relief programs to line their own pockets," said U.S. Attorney Murray. "My office is working hard to ferret out criminals who try to exploit the pandemic and steal funds intended for the economic recovery of businesses and communities across the Western District."

"The United States Postal Inspection Service is committed to combatting fraud and the illegal use of our nation's mail system," said Inspector in Charge Coke. "During this tragic pandemic, our nation has shown great resolve and resiliency, evidenced by the majority of its great citizens. Unfortunately, we have also seen those that look to take advantage of these situations by fraudulently obtaining funds meant to help keep many of the small businesses in our local communities afloat. The United States Postal Inspection Service will use every resource available to bring justice to those that would take advantage of this pandemic for personal gain."

According to allegations contained in the indictment, beginning in April 2020, Jones engaged in a scheme to fraudulently obtain disaster-related loan benefits in the form of an Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) sponsored by the United States Small Business Administration (SBA). This SBA program, expanded under the CARES Act, is designed to provide support for small businesses to remedy economic harm caused by the COVID-19 outbreak.

The indictment alleges that on or about April 16, 2020, Jones filed articles of incorporation in Delaware for Ramses Air Freight & Transport Inc. ("Ramses"), and listed his Charlotte home address as the business's principal office. The indictment further alleges that Jones, who at the time was on federal supervised release for a previous felony conviction, submitted a loan application that contained false statements and

misrepresentations regarding the company's revenues, costs, and employees and his prior criminal record. The indictment also alleges that, as a result of the fraudulent application, Jones obtained \$142,900 in proceeds in June and July 2020, which he used for personal and other unauthorized purposes.

A federal arrest warrant for Jones has been issued. He is charged with one count of wire fraud in relation to a disaster benefit, which carries a maximum prison term of 30 years and a \$1,000,000 fine, one count of false statements to the SBA, which carries a maximum prison term of 30 years and a \$1,000,000 fine, and one count of engaging in monetary transactions in criminally derived property, which carries a maximum prison term of 10 years.

The charges in the indictments are allegations and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

In making today's announcement, U.S. Attorney Murray thanked the investigating efforts of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service.

Assistant United States Attorney Graham Billings, of the U.S. Attorney's Office in Charlotte, is prosecuting the case.

The Department of Justice and U.S. Attorney's Offices across the country remain vigilant in detecting, investigating, and prosecuting wrongdoing related to the COVID-19 pandemic. If you think you are a victim of coronavirus fraud or have information pertaining to fraud involving COVID-19, contact the National Center for Disaster Fraud Hotline at 866-720-5721 or submit a complaint online using the [NCDF Web Complaint Form](#). Members of the public in the Western District of North Carolina are also encouraged to call 704-344-6222 to reach their local Coronavirus Fraud Coordinator.

Topic(s):

Coronavirus

Financial Fraud

Component(s):

USAO - North Carolina, Western

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