



U. S. Department of Justice

Jason R. Coody
Acting United States Attorney
Northern District of Florida

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For more information, contact:
U.S. Attorney's Office
Northern District of Florida
(850) 216-3829
USAFLN.Press.Office@usdoj.gov
Follow us on Twitter | @NDFLnews

DELRAY BEACH MAN INDICTED FOR COVID-19 RELIEF FRAUD, ALLEGEDLY BY USING IDENTITIES OF ELDERLY VICTIMS RESIDING AT SENIOR LIVING FACILITIES

GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA – A federal grand jury returned a four-count indictment this afternoon against Jeremie Saintvil of Delray Beach, Florida, for fraudulently obtaining or attempting to obtain over \$1,500,000 in Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans. Saintvil, 46, is charged with bank fraud, making false statements to a federally insured institution, aggravated identity theft, and making false statements. Jason R. Coody, Acting United States Attorney for the Northern District of Florida, announced the indictment.

In addition to allegedly submitting a fraudulent PPP loan application for a fictitious business in his own name, Saintvil also allegedly stole the identities of eight elderly individuals – seven of whom were residents of senior living facilities and one who was related to him – as a part of his complex scheme to obtain more than \$1.5 million in forgivable loans. In doing so, Saintvil is alleged to have submitted fraudulent loan applications to multiple financial institutions, including one headquartered in Alachua County, Florida.

The indictment alleges that Saintvil submitted a total of nine fraudulent PPP loan applications to nine different federally insured credit unions and banks on behalf of businesses that did not exist. Saintvil allegedly falsified his identity (in all but one of these applications), misrepresented the number of employees and payroll expenses of the non-existent companies, and made numerous other inaccurate statements. According to the indictment, Saintvil also submitted falsified tax documents and bank account information in support of these applications.

The indictment further alleges that Saintvil opened bank accounts and lines of credit at financial institutions and credit card companies in the names of his elderly victims. Saintvil then allegedly obtained physical checks, debit cards, and credit cards in the names of his elderly victims, and used the services of an electronic payments processor to transfer funds from the fraudulently obtained lines of credit into the bank accounts that he fraudulently opened.

The Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act is a federal law enacted March 29, 2020. It is designed to provide emergency financial assistance to millions of

Americans who are suffering the economic effects resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. One source of relief provided by the CARES Act is the authorization of up to \$349 billion in forgivable loans to small businesses for job retention and certain other expenses through the PPP. In April 2020, Congress authorized over \$300 billion in additional funding, and in December 2020, another \$284 billion. The Small Business Administration (SBA) guarantees PPP loans which are funded by participating financial institutions.

The PPP allows qualifying small businesses and other organizations to receive loans with a maturity of two years and an interest rate of one percent. Businesses must use PPP loan proceeds for payroll costs, interest on mortgages, rent and utilities. The PPP then allows the interest and principal to be forgiven if businesses spent the loan proceeds on qualifying expenses within a set time period, and used at least a certain percentage of the loan proceeds for payroll expenses.

This indictment resulted from a joint investigation by Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigations, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Small Business Administration - Office of Inspector General. Assistant United States Attorney Justin M. Keen is prosecuting the case.

If convicted, Saintvil faces a maximum penalty of 30 years in prison for the charges of bank fraud and making false statements to a federally insured institution, and a maximum penalty of 5 years in prison for the making a false statement charge. Saintvil also faces an additional 2-year mandatory minimum prison sentence, consecutive to any other sentence imposed, for the aggravated identity theft count if convicted.

An indictment is merely an allegation by a grand jury that a defendant has committed a violation of federal criminal law and is not evidence of guilt. All defendants are presumed innocent and entitled to a fair trial, during which it will be the government's burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt at trial.

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>.

The United States Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Florida is one of 94 offices that serve as the nation's principal litigators under the direction of the Attorney General. To access public court documents online, please visit the [U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida](https://www.uscourts.gov/court-system/US-District-Court-for-the-Northern-District-of-Florida) website. For more information about the United States Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Florida, visit <http://www.justice.gov/usao/fln/index.html>.

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