



NEWS RELEASE

From New York State Inspector General Letizia Tagliafierro

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NYS INSPECTOR GENERAL ANNOUNCES GUILTY PLEA OF INDIVIDUAL WHO USED ANOTHER MAN'S IDENTITY TO STEAL MORE THAN \$21,000 IN PUBLIC BENEFITS

New York State Inspector General Letizia Tagliafierro, along with the U.S. Department of Labor and the New York State Department of Labor, today announced the guilty plea of a man who, for years, assumed the identity of another man in order to illegally obtain more than \$21,000 in New York State Unemployment Insurance, Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Safety Net Assistance Program (SNA) benefits. Meanwhile, the individual whose identity was stolen has been living in California his whole life.

A man formerly/last known as "Glen Cooper," a/k/a "Glendon Cooper," of Brooklyn, pled guilty today to Access Device Fraud and Theft of Government Services before the Hon. George B. Daniels, United States District Judge for the Southern District of New York. He also signed an order to pay full restitution. He is scheduled to be sentenced February 25, 2020.

In court today, he identified himself as "Glendon Emerson Cooper."

"This individual stole an unsuspecting person's identity and capitalized on it for years by bilking social assistance programs meant to help those truly in need," said Inspector General Tagliafierro. "However, through the collaboration of state and federal agencies, justice has been delivered."

"The actions of the defendant in this case were despicable, and the fact that he was caught and prosecuted proves what I have said time and time again: unemployment fraud is a crime, and if you try it here in New York, we will catch you," said New York State Department of Labor Commissioner Roberta Reardon.

"For years, John Doe aka Glendon Cooper, whose true identity is unknown, assumed the identities of innocent victims to fraudulently apply for numerous benefits from the Federal Government and the State of New York, including Unemployment Insurance benefits, to which he was not entitled. Today's guilty plea affirms the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General's commitment to working with our federal and state law enforcement partners to investigate identity theft that adversely impacts the integrity of the unemployment insurance program," said Michael C. Mikulka, Special Agent-in-Charge, New York Region, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General.

According to the complaint, "Cooper" used the name, date of birth and social security number of

another person to obtain more than \$21,000 in benefits from the public assistance programs to which he was not entitled. Specifically, from April 2017 to April 2019, “Cooper” submitted applications for unemployment insurance benefits on five separate occasions, varying the information slightly each time to avoid detection. Based on the false information submitted, “Cooper’s” applications for Unemployment Insurance Benefits were approved and he received three pre-loaded debit cards with various amounts (April 2017: \$11,190; May 2018: \$4,495; and April 2019: \$1,350).

In addition to unemployment benefits, “Cooper” also applied for public assistance benefits using similarly fraudulent information. In July 2017, he received \$2,196 in Medicaid benefits. In April 2018, he received \$883 in Medicaid benefits, \$960 in SNAP benefits and \$448 in SNA benefits.

The investigation found that the real Glen Edward Cooper was born in and had resided in California his entire life. His birthdate and social security matched those the defendant used when applying for unemployment and Medicaid benefits in April and July 2017, respectively.

Inspector General Tagliaferro thanked the New York State Department of Labor and the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of the Inspector General for their assistance in the investigation. She also thanked the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of New York for prosecuting the case.

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