



**United States Attorney's Office
Eastern District of Michigan**

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PRESS RELEASE

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**Southfield Man Charged in Multi-State
Identify Theft and Unemployment Fraud Scheme**

A Southfield man was charged in a criminal complaint for his alleged role in a multi-state unemployment insurance fraud scheme aimed at defrauding the State of Michigan, the State of Pennsylvania, and the U.S. Government of funds earmarked for unemployment assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic, announced United States Attorney Matthew Schneider.

Joining in the announcement were Special Agent-in-Charge Steven M. D'Antuono, Federal Bureau of Investigation; Irene Lindow, Special Agent-in-Charge, Chicago Region, U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General; and Chief Phil Langmeyer, Bloomfield Township Police Department.

Charged is Samuel George Baker, 37.

According to the complaint, Baker has filed numerous fraudulent applications for unemployment insurance benefits in the names of various individuals in state of Pennsylvania, causing over \$150,000 in fraudulent UI benefits to be paid out unlawfully. It is alleged that during the application process, Baker requested the benefits to be paid out via debit card, and then caused the cards to be mailed to various addresses here in Michigan. The cards were then loaded with additional UI payments every two weeks, throughout the duration of the scheme. According the complaint, Baker began making near-daily withdrawals in July 2020, using multiple cards each day. Baker is also alleged to have used proceeds from his crimes to purchase at least one piece of high-end jewelry—a rare, \$45,000 Rolex watch.

It is also alleged that in May 2020, Baker filed multiple fraudulent Michigan unemployment insurance claims, using false social security numbers and fake driver's licenses. Investigation into this aspect of Baker's scheme remains ongoing; however, it is alleged that Baker has already received more than \$37,000 in benefits from his Michigan unemployment claims.

"At a time when thousands of people are out of work because of the pandemic, Samuel Baker is charged with stealing unemployment benefits that should have gone to Michiganders trying to feed their families. Anyone who steals unemployment funds steals from the people of Michigan," stated United States Attorney Schneider.

"Mr. Baker's scheme exploited a fund designed specifically to support Americans during this incredibly challenging time," said Steven M. D'Antuono, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI in Michigan. "Thanks to the hard work of all of the agencies involved in this investigation, those individuals who need the support at this critical time will be able to receive it."

"An important mission of the Office of Inspector General is to investigate allegations relating to unemployment insurance fraud. We will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to investigate these types of allegations," stated Special Agent-in-Charge Irene Lindow, Chicago Region, U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General.

A complaint is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. Trial cannot be held on felony charges in a complaint. When the investigation is completed, a determination will be made whether to seek a felony indictment.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Ryan A. Particka. The investigation is being conducted jointly by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department of Labor, Office of the Inspector General, and the Bloomfield Township Police Department.