

Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
District of Maryland

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Two Nigerian Nationals Plead Guilty in Federal Court in Maryland for Bank and Mail Fraud Conspiracy and Related Charges Just Prior to Trial

One Defendant was a USPS Letter Carrier Who Allegedly Stole Mail Which was Used to Perpetrate the Fraud; Defendants Stole \$565,000 from Maryland Businesses and Identities from USPS Customers

Baltimore, Maryland – Two Nigerian nationals, Johnson B. Ogunlana, age 25, of Edgewood, Maryland, and Samson A. Oguntuyi, age 29, of Atlanta, Georgia, pleaded guilty on the eve of trial to federal charges related to schemes to defraud financial institutions, retail establishments and other business victims, often using the stolen personal information of individual victims. Specifically, Ogunlana pleaded guilty on August 23, 2021 to conspiracy to commit bank fraud and mail fraud, access device fraud, aggravated identity theft, and theft of mail by a postal employee. Yesterday, Oguntuyi pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit bank fraud and mail fraud, bank fraud, and aggravated identity theft.

The guilty pleas were announced by Acting United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Jonathan F. Lenzner; Special Agent in Charge Imari R. Niles of the U.S. Postal Service, Office of Inspector General; and Postal Inspector in Charge Daniel A. Adame of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service - Washington Division.

According to their plea agreements, Ogunlana was a letter carrier for the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) in Brooklyn, Maryland. Ogunlana knew that his duties and responsibilities as a letter carrier included handling, sorting, collecting, and delivering letter and parcel mail to postal customers residing and conducting business on his assigned postal delivery routes, and preserving and protecting the security of all mail in his custody.

Ogunlana and Oguntuyi acknowledged that between July 25, 2016 and February 5, 2019, they conspired together and with others to steal bank checks and credit and debit cards from the mail, open fraudulent business banking accounts using the names of victim businesses and the stolen identities of victim postal customers to negotiate the stolen checks by depositing them into the fraudulent bank accounts, and then conduct transactions with stolen payment cards and with money derived from the stolen checks.

For example, Ogunlana intercepted and stole mail pieces containing credit cards addressed to individual victims and sent photos of the stolen mail pieces and credit cards through a messaging application to Oguntuyi and other conspirators. Oguntuyi then used the victims' personal identifying information ("PII") to activate the stolen credit cards and to obtain new credit cards the victims never requested or applied for. Once the stolen credit cards were activated, members of the conspiracy used the credit cards to make retail purchases.

As detailed in their plea agreements, members of the conspiracy registered fraudulent businesses with state government agencies using the names of victim businesses and the names and identifying information of postal customer identity theft victims as the agents and/or incorporators of the businesses. Ogunlana and others used stolen payment cards issued to identity theft victims to pay fees to register some of the fraudulent businesses. Ogunlana also stole checks payable to victim businesses, whose mail was serviced out of the USPS facility where Ogunlana worked, by intercepting their mail. Oguntuyi and Ogunlana then endorsed some of the checks by forging the signatures of identity theft victims and deposited the checks into the fraudulent business bank accounts the conspirators opened in the names of the victim businesses. The conspirators then withdrew the money from the accounts through cash withdrawals, debit card purchases and cash back transactions at retail merchants, wire transfers, and by writing checks drawn on the accounts.

As detailed in their plea agreements, at least \$565,000 was stolen from two victim businesses and at least eight postal customers were victims of identity theft.

Ogunlana and Oguntuyi each face a maximum sentence of 30 years in federal prison for conspiracy to commit bank fraud and mail fraud. Oguntuyi also faces a maximum of 30 years for bank fraud. Ogunlana faces a maximum sentence of 15 years in prison for access device fraud and a maximum of five years in federal prison for theft of mail by a postal employee. Both defendants face a mandatory sentence of two years, consecutive to any other sentence imposed, for aggravated identity theft. Actual sentences for federal crimes are typically less than the maximum penalties. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after taking into account the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors. U.S. District Judge Catherine C. Blake has not yet scheduled sentencing for the defendants.

Acting United States Attorney Jonathan F. Lenzner commended the U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service for their work in the investigation and thanked the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration for its assistance. Mr. Lenzner thanked Assistant U.S. Attorney Matthew J. Maddox and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael F. Davio, who are prosecuting the case.

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