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PRESS RELEASE

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New York Woman Sentenced to Two Years in Prison For Stealing More Than \$130,000 in Two Schemes Carried Out in D.C., Maryland and New York Admits Collecting Fraudulent Unemployment Benefits, As Well as Stealing from Former Employer

WASHINGTON – Sakinah Smith, 27, of New York, N.Y., was sentenced today to two years in prison for carrying out a pair of schemes, including one in which she used stolen personal identification information to collect more than \$80,000 in fraudulent unemployment benefits, and another in which she stole more than \$50,000 from a former employer.

The sentencing was announced by U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr., Timothy A. Gallagher, Acting Assistant Director in Charge of the FBI's Washington Field Office; Bill Jones, Special Agent in Charge for the Washington Regional Office of the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Inspector General - Office of Labor Racketeering and Fraud Investigations, and Blanche L. Bruce, Interim Inspector General for the District of Columbia.

Smith pled guilty in May 2014 in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia to one count of wire fraud. She was sentenced by the Honorable Senior Judge Thomas F. Hogan. Upon completion of her prison term, Smith will be placed on three years of supervised release. She also was ordered to pay over \$132,000 in restitution. While on supervised release, Judge Hogan ordered that Smith not hold any employment involving the handling of money.

According to a statement of offense filed as part of the guilty plea, Smith created an events planning service in 2009 in Washington, D.C. She created a website for "Saki Mone Events Management" and posted employment advertisements on Craigslist. Potential applicants were asked to provide personal information, including dates of birth and social security numbers.

Smith then used this personal information to fraudulently request unemployment benefits in the names of 17 individual applicants. Between 2009 and 2012, Smith obtained \$80,111 in fraudulent unemployment benefits from the District of Columbia, Maryland and New York. The benefits, in the names of the 17 applicants, were deposited into Smith's own financial accounts.

In a second scheme, Smith admitted that she fraudulently wired about \$52,174 from an employer's bank account to accounts she created for herself. This activity took place from November 2009 through May 2010, while Smith was working for a temporary employment agency in Washington, D.C.

In announcing the sentence, U.S. Attorney Machen, Acting Assistant Director in Charge Gallagher, Special Agent in Charge Jones, and Interim Inspector General Bruce commended the work of those who investigated the case from the FBI's Washington Field Office, the Labor Department's Inspector General's Office, and the District of Columbia Office of the Inspector General. They also thanked the New York State Department of Labor – Office of Special Investigations; the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation – Division of Unemployment Insurance; the Virginia Employment Commission; the District of Columbia Department of Employment Services, and the Burlington, N.C. Police Department for providing assistance in the investigation.

They acknowledged the efforts of those who handled by the case from the U.S. Attorney's Office, including Assistant U.S. Attorney Diane Lucas, who assisted on forfeiture issues; Paralegal Specialists Donna Galindo and Angela Lawrence; Victim/Witness Advocate Yvonne Bryant; Intelligence Specialist Sharon Johnson, and former Intern Abigail Pierce. Finally, they expressed appreciation for the work of Assistant U.S. Attorney Philip A. Selden, who prosecuted the matter.

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