

**10/28/24** “More than \$30 million in benefits.” That’s the record-setting amount that Georgia resident Tyshion Hicks and her pals swindled from COVID-19 relief funds by using the stolen identities of real persons to submit over 5,000 unemployment insurance claims on behalf of fictitious employers. Ms. Hicks, who pled guilty to mail fraud and ID theft, just drew twelve years in prison. Seven of her helpers have already pled guilty or been sentenced.

**10/1/24** More than *fourteen-million* bucks. That’s how much Zishan Alvi, owner of a Chicago lab, collected from Federal COVID-19 funds by submitting numerous fraudulent COVID-19 test results for reimbursement. Worse still, he falsely informed numerous patients that their tests had proven negative, even though they were either not performed or the results were inconclusive. Alvi just pled guilty and faces up to twenty years in prison.

**9/12/24** Between 2020-2023 Orange County, Calif. funneled millions in COVID relief funds to a local nonprofit, which said it would use it to feed seniors and disabled persons. But the money was diverted by the nonprofit’s officers, including the daughter of Supervisor Andrew Do, who allegedly pocketed the cash for their own use. Orange County is suing Do for \$10 million and has suspended him from the Board. Federal agents have also executed search warrants at the homes of Do and his daughter.

**9/9/24** *Twenty-five residences*, two luxury cars, gambling, investing. All paid for with “more than \$11.2 million” in COVID-19 funds that 30-year old Nevada man Meelad Dezfooli fraudulently obtained by pretending that it would be used to pay the salaries of his many (non-existent) employees at his (non-existent) companies. Just convicted at trial on multiple counts of bank fraud, money laundering and so on, Mr. Dezfooli faces decades in prison. (A single bank fraud charge can draw thirty years.)

**8/27/24** Eighty-seven months in Federal prison. That’s the sentence handed down to Christopher John Badsey, a 63-year old L.A.-area man who pocketed more than three million dollars from companies to whom he had promised to supply “millions of boxes of nitrile gloves” during the height of the COVID pandemic. As it turns out, he had neither gloves nor the warehouses where they were supposedly kept. He used the proceeds to gorge himself on luxury boats and automobiles. Those, too will soon be gone.

**6/25/24** More than *eighteen-million* dollars. That’s what two middle-aged New York entrepreneurs, brothers Peter Khaim and Arkadiy Khaimov, swindled from the COVID relief program. And eight and six years in prison are their respective sentences for pretending that pharmacies they and their associates owned dispensed and distributed

large amounts of expensive drugs during and after the pandemic. Problem is, “real” doctors had not prescribed the drugs, and the “patients” didn’t exist. Alas, this kind of misbehavior isn’t rare. Since March 2007, Federal Health Care strike forces have charged more than 5,400 individuals with falsely billing the U.S. and private insurers “more than \$27 *billion*.”

**6/10/24** COVID fraud is in the news. Seventy persons were charged with defrauding a COVID-related program of \$250 million by submitting false vouchers for “millions of meals” that were supposedly provided to needy recipients. [Five of the first seven to be tried were just convicted](#). During deliberations a juror got a bag with \$120,000 cash. They reported the bribe attempt and were excused from the panel. In Chicago, [Federal charges were levied](#) against a man who defrauded Medicare of \$60 million by falsely claiming to have provided “millions” of COVID test kits. And in Georgia, a lawyer (he was once a cop) drew [seven years in prison](#) for netting \$15 million by submitting false applications for PPP loans.

**4/26/24** “Health care fraud, wire fraud, and money laundering.” Those are the crimes allegedly committed by three laboratory owners who submitted \$36 million dollars worth of claims for medically unnecessary Covid tests during a four-year period. Authorities claim that Enrique Perez-Paris, Diego Sanudo Sanchez Chocron and Gregory Charles “Milo” Caskey paid off collaborators for getting health care providers to submit the requests, which the accused passed on.

**4/10/24** According to the Justice Department, since its establishment in May 2021 the COVID-19 task force has filed criminal charges against more than 3,500 persons for purposely misappropriating over \$2 billion in pandemic relief funds. In addition, civil actions have led to over 400 settlements, and more than \$1.4 billion has been recovered through seizure and forfeiture. [Report](#)

**2/19/24** COVID-19 fraud prosecutions continue. In a major case, a pair of Georgia residents face decades in prison after a jury convicted them of orchestrating a scheme that drained more than \$11 million dollars from the Paycheck Protection Program. Testimony revealed that they and several accomplices submitted documents that claimed they employed dozens of employees and incurred major expenses running a number of businesses. Alas, there were neither employees nor businesses.

**12/8/23** COVID fraud has sullied Government ranks. Memphis resident and former IRS management employee Brian Saulsberry, 47, pled guilty to fraudulently obtaining \$171,400 in COVID loan funds and using them to invest for personal gain. He faces a maximum 10-year term. One year ago [five other IRS employees were charged](#) with

similar frauds. Each was reportedly convicted.

**11/10/23** New York City announced a “collaborative approach” to combat retail thefts, which have surged since the pandemic. It will strive to implement recommendations from a December 2022 “summit” that addressed shoplifting by both individuals and organized groups. Beyond more policing, strategies will be developed to address poverty and provide enhanced social service programming to substance abusers, mentally ill persons and the homeless.

**10/16/23** Seventeen sworn Broward County, Florida deputy sheriffs, including eight assigned to law enforcement and nine working detention, were charged with multiple Federal felonies for obtaining nearly \$500,000 in PPP loans by falsely asserting that their businesses and employees had suffered financial harm because of the pandemic. Charges include submitting false information, falsifying tax returns, and committing wire fraud. [DOJ news release](#)

**10/6/23** Major COVID violators continue getting their comeuppance. [Houston man Amir Ageel](#) just drew fifteen years for leading a ring that fraudulently obtained more than \$20 million in loans by using fake bank records and tax forms to “prove” the existence of numerous phony employees. [And a California woman, Lourdes Navarro](#), pled guilty to collecting \$54 million over two years during which she and a conspirator submitted bills for \$359 million worth of purported specialized COVID tests.

**10/3/23** [Five Texas men](#) pled guilty to fraudulently obtaining business loans ranging from about \$500,000 to nearly \$1 million from the COVID-19 paycheck protection program to pay non-existing employees. Fifteen persons who helped them carry out the scheme have also been convicted. In a separate case, [an Orange County, Calif. osteopath](#) has been charged with fraudulently obtaining \$150 million by submitting fraudulent claims relating to COVID-19 testing and treatment of the uninsured.

**8/25/23** Concerns that fraudsters had reaped “hundreds of billions of dollars” from COVID relief funds led the Attorney General to launch a major investigatory “sweep” this summer. A combined Federal-State effort resulted in “more than 700 enforcement actions” and the recovery of “more than \$200 million” in illicit gains. Accused included thirty members of a Wisconsin street gang and a California man whose fraudulent acts cost taxpayers more than \$60 million.

**6/2/23** Two and one-half years in Federal prison. That’s the sentence handed down to a supervisory physician at a Colorado medical clinic who falsely secured \$250,000 from

two COVID-19 relief programs that were intended to help firms struggling because of the pandemic. Instead, Dr. Francis F. Joseph, 58, spent the proceeds “to pay for his personal expenses.”

**5/3/23** In one of the stiffest terms yet handed down for a COVID-related fraud, Louisiana man Michael Tolliver was sentenced to ten years in Federal prison for submitting false loan applications and falsified tax returns that claimed he employed numerous workers. According to DOJ, Mr. Tolliver secured more than a million dollars and used it “to support his own personal lifestyle,” which included the purchase of expensive jewelry and expensive vehicles.

**4/21/23** Four-hundred ninety *million*. That’s what DOJ claims was stolen by eighteen fraudsters across the U.S. who submitted false billings to the U.S. Government for pandemic-related health services. One lab owner alone was allegedly responsible for “over \$358 million in false and fraudulent claims” for providing specialized testing that no one had asked for or wanted. All face criminal charges. So far, there have been 53 health-related fraud prosecutions and twenty convictions.

**4/18/23** Federal authorities indicted Florida brothers Carl and Patrick Charles for running a scheme that resulted in the disbursement of more than \$2.5 million in loans and advances from the Small Business Administration under the Covid-19 relief act. Both are charged with several counts of wire fraud, with each count punishable by up to twenty years in prison.

**4/5/23** “More than 12,000” low-risk Federal prisoners were released to “home confinement” during the pandemic. With expiration of the emergency period, a new Federal rule directs that those who did well and exhibited full compliance be continued on home detention, while those who had minor problems be considered for relocation to “Residential Reentry Centers” instead of being re-imprisoned. [Bureau of Prisons FAQ](#)

**2/27/23** Sixty *billion* dollars. That’s a low-ball estimate of COVID unemployment benefits that were fraudulently collected by fraudsters, including domestic and international crime rings. An overwhelmed system and poor vetting enabled the losses. And a five-year statute of limitations for bringing charges now threatens enforcement. Officials are asking it be extended to ten years, as was done for frauds committed against the paycheck protection (PPP) and disaster loan programs. [COVID prosecutions](#)

**2/9/23** COVID fraud remains in the headlines as jurors convict a Texas man who induced other businesspersons to join him in a vast scheme to collect more than \$35 million in forgivable PPP loans by vastly inflating their employee rolls and business

expenses. Abdul Fatani distributed more than a half-million dollars to his co-conspirators and pocketed a large amount for himself using phony payroll checks to launder his ill-gotten proceeds.

**12/29/22** After posting a two-decade peak in 2019, Federal investigations and arrests plunged during the pandemic. Most dramatically, investigations fell from 12,995 to 6,529 and arrests dropped from 12,325 to 2,369 between March and April 2020 (a single month). Convictions and prison sentences also receded, though far less steeply. One year later, investigations had climbed somewhat, to 7,730 while arrests had risen nearly three-fold, to 6,971. But the numbers remain down.

**11/10/22** Federal prosecutors have charged an Indian national, who formerly resided in North Carolina, with pocketing more than \$3 million in Paycheck Protection loans he fraudulently obtained from U.S. banks. Abhishek Krishnan had applied for over \$8 million in funds by creating bogus companies with pretend rosters of employees. [Krishnan was already facing Federal charges in North Carolina](#) for distributing misbranded and adulterated protein powders to wholesale and retail customers.

**10/5/22** Three IRS employees pled guilty and two others have been charged with fraudulently obtaining as much as \$171,400 in Federal COVID relief loans by pretending to operate non-existing businesses that were impacted by the pandemic. Their illicit gains were used “for cars, luxury goods, and personal travel, including trips to Las Vegas.” In all, their applications requested more than \$1 million.

**9/21/22** In “the largest pandemic relief fraud scheme charged to date,” DOJ indicted 47 defendants for misappropriating \$250 million in Federal Child Nutrition program funds. A central figure, Aimee Bock, director of Minnesota nonprofit “Feeding Our Future,” allegedly got conspirators to create “dozens of shell companies” that pretended to provide meals. But instead of feeding needy children, they diverted the monies “to purchase luxury cars, houses, jewelry, and coastal resort property abroad.”

**8/24/22** A high-end Los Angeles retailer complains that face coverings makes police lineups useless. When customers “wear bucket hats, hoodies, and you can only see their eyes...You can’t say that’s the right person.” When two mask-wearing clients who had been booted for shoplifting recently came in, it sealed the deal. “We do not allow the wearing of face masks” reads the sign on the window.

**8/20/22** NHTSA reported that 2002’s first quarter experienced the most motor vehicle traffic deaths since the first quarter of 2002. This year’s estimated toll, 9,560, is 7

percent higher than last year's 8,935, which was itself a 13.2 percent jump from the first quarter of 2020, when 7,893 were killed. Per 100 million vehicle miles, 2022's first-quarter fatality rate (1.22) also sets a record. [According to NHTSA head Steve Cliff](#), "when everyday life came to a halt in March 2020, risky behaviors skyrocketed, and traffic fatalities spiked. We'd hoped these trends were limited to 2020, but sadly they aren't."

**8/17/22** *Five trillion* dollars have gone out for pandemic relief. But "billions" have been misappropriated by pretenders. Schemers obtained forgivable loans for make-believe businesses, received compensation for unpaid work they never performed, and stole identities to collect benefits for others. So far 1,500 have been charged and "more than 500" convicted. But the Labor Dept. alone has 39,000 "active investigations."

**8/2/22** Enrollment in public schools declined with the pandemic. And even as schools reopened, large numbers of students stayed away. Some enrolled in charters, but where many others have gone is unknown. Funding, which is normally based on enrollment, plunged. That's led fifty schools to close in Chicago alone, most in impoverished minority neighborhoods. Some Federal Covid relief money is being used to keep remaining schools open, but it will soon run out. "Luring students back" seems vital.

**5/9/22** "Hundreds" of LAPD officers reportedly ignored agency policy to mask up during the pandemic. In all, 268 formal complaints about mask violations were filed during 2020 and 2021; some apparently involved multiple cops. But only two officers wound up being formally punished for not wearing a mask. Nearly all the others were admonished or counseled in a way that circumvented the need to record a "sustained complaint" in their personnel file.

**12/8/21** Described as a "criminal syndicate" [by Federal prosecutors](#), eight members of an extended Los Angeles-area family were convicted this year of fraudulently obtaining millions of dollars in COVID loans by using "dozens" of fake or stolen identities. Their illicit gains were used to buy homes and luxury goods. Its two ringleaders, a husband and wife, fled before sentencing. Most recently, a sister-in-law got ten years and her husband, five. Despite prosecutors' request that she be remanded, a judge released her, possibly to arrange for the care of two teen daughters before reporting to prison.

**10/27/21** L.A. City employees, including police, who have not been vaccinated must submit to twice-weekly testing at their expense. Those not fully vaccinated or who fail to get a medical or religious exemption by December 18 will "face corrective action." Employees who are ultimately approved for exemptions will be reimbursed. For the official rules click [here](#).



**10/21/21** New York City is requiring that all city workers get their first shot by October 29. Those who don't will wind up on unpaid leave. While the police union objects, NYPD Commissioner Dermot Shea feels that the rule "makes sense." Seattle's new vaccination mandate has led to the firing of six police officers; 93 others are off the job seeking exemptions. Washington state fired 127 troopers, and in Massachusetts "at least" 150 troopers are reportedly resigning.

**10/18/21** According to the Officer Down Memorial Page, "COVID is the #1 killer of LEOs in 2020 and 2021. Getting vaccinated is just as important as wearing your vest and your seatbelt." ODMP reports 362 officer line-of-duty deaths so far this year. COVID-19 led to 231, and hostile gunfire caused 49. Comparable figures for 2020 are 374 deaths, 245 attributable to COVID-19, and 45 to hostile gunfire.

**10/14/21** Chicago has required that all city employees report their vaccination status by tomorrow or be placed on leave without pay. Those who lack shots can substitute weekly testing until the end of the year. But FOP president John Catanzara has advised officers to ignore these demands and turn in forms declaring themselves as "conscientious objectors." Should they be sent home the city would lose half its already skimpy police coverage. City council members and ordinary residents are predictably aghast. Former FOP president Dean Angelo, Sr., 67, [died from COVID-19 complications](#) two days ago.

**10/3/21** According to the NLEOMF, line-of-duty officer deaths "are on a pace to exceed the 295 law enforcement fatalities recorded in 2020, which was the second highest total on record." COVID-19 has been by far the largest cause of deaths during 2020-2021. Of the 155 officers who perished during the first six months of 2021, 71 died from a COVID-19 infection contracted while on duty. Thirty-eight lost their lives in traffic incidents and 28 by gunfire. Eighteen deaths were attributed to other causes.

**9/17/21** Federal authorities have charged a middle-aged Chicago woman with fraudulently obtaining tax refunds and COVID-19 relief payments by misappropriating information from the death certificates of murdered local youth. Posing as a relative, she obtained twenty-six of these in 2019, all for homicide victims ages two to twenty-two. As she carried out this scam, Katrina Pierce, 50 was on parole for a decade-old conviction on a similar crime.

**9/13/21** San Diego P.D. has nearly 2,000 cops. [About half report being unvaccinated](#). Los Angeles has about 12,000, [also half unvaccinated](#). Both cities are requiring that employees get the shots. According to San Diego's police union, ninety percent of 733 officers who responded to a survey oppose mandatory vaccination, and sixty-five percent would consider resigning. In August the NAACP urged the FBI to investigate [a SDPD officer's online rant](#) urging colleagues to "stand up for our God given freedoms" and reject forced vaccination and masking. LAPD's officer union supports vaccinations.

But six LAPD officers, including a Lieutenant, have sued the city in Federal Court over the mandate.

**8/17/21** Federal authorities are battling yet another COVID-19 scam. On August 17 the FBI arrested a licensed Chicago pharmacist for twelve counts of stealing Government property. In two months Tangtang Zhao sold 125 authentic CDC vaccination cards to eleven buyers on eBay. His actions enabled persons to pretend that they got their shots, thus placing others “at risk of serious injury or death.”

**7/31/21** As part of [Texas’ border security initiative](#), which includes building fences and interdicting the flow of drugs, Governor Greg Abbott ordered troopers to “stop and turn around” vehicles smuggling immigrants, supposedly to combat the spread of COVID. That finally proved too much for the U.S. Justice Department. Insisting that border affairs are not Texas’ business, it sued in Federal court.

**5/18/21** DOJ has formed a “COVID-19 Fraud Enforcement Task Force” that will employ civil, criminal and administrative remedies to combat the profusion of frauds against Government programs established to help individuals and businesses during the pandemic. Key members of the team will include Justice Dept. lawyers and the FBI. For DOJ’s COVID-19 fraud prosecutions, click [here](#)

**3/10/21** BJS reports that the local jail population decreased about twenty-five percent during the twelve months ending June 30, 2020. Inmates being held on misdemeanors declined about 45 percent; those held for felonies, about 18 percent. At mid-year 2020 the jail incarceration rate was 167/100K, the lowest in three decades. COVID-imposed restrictions are considered the primary cause. [Report](#)

**3/9/21** Lethal gunplay is way up in Los Angeles, with 64 murders and 267 shootings thru March 2 compared with 46 murders and 111 shootings during that period last year. While many killings continue to be attributed to gangs, armed robberies are taking place throughout the city. And in what an LAPD assistant chief called a “disturbing trend,” holdup victims are increasingly being shot.

**2/20/21** Idaho lawmakers are seeking to outlaw demonstrations at the homes of individuals. Their move comes as individuals and right-wing groups that oppose Covid-19 restrictions, including Ammon Bundy’s People’s Rights network, voice their displeasure by demonstrating at the private residences of officials and police officers. But civil libertarians oppose the measure.

**2/1/21** Federal courts throughout the U.S. started suspending jury trials in mid-2020, and in many areas that continues. California’s Central District, which includes Los Angeles and Orange counties, has not had a jury trial since March 2020. That recently led Judge Cormac Carney to dismiss four cases “with prejudice,” meaning they cannot



be refilled. One was for armed robbery; two were felons caught with guns, and one was of a doctor charged with illegally distributing drugs. [Federal announcement](#)

**12/16/20** LAPD is blaming COVID-inspired early releases from jail and prison of gang members and repeat offenders for the dramatic increase in violence being experienced in poverty-stricken South Los Angeles, with forty killings in a recent week alone. According to a deputy chief, “information is getting out to the street that if you carry a firearm and you get arrested, you aren’t going to stay in jail.”

**12/10/20** [Sheriffs in two major Southern California counties](#) announced that their deputies will not be enforcing the Governor’s restrictive new Covid orders. Orange County Sheriff Don Barnes said that masks and dining were matters of “personal responsibility.” Riverside Sheriff Chad Bianco called the directives “ridiculous” and “dictatorial” given the major “split” about the virus among medical experts. Meanwhile, thanks to the pandemic and civil disorder, [Illinois gun stores have been doing “record-shattering” business](#) this year, with many sales going to new gun owners. Aside from more violence, authorities fear that increased gun availability will lead to higher suicide rates as well.

**12/5/20** LAPD’s budget was slashed by \$150 million in July. That barely dented the city’s budget shortfall, which will hit \$675 million this fiscal year. Although murders and shootings are up by about a third, the city’s budget analyst recommends cutting LAPD by 951 officers and 728 civilians.

**12/3/20** California’s illegal diversion of COVID-19 unemployment funds to prisoners has reportedly reached \$400 million. It was facilitated by state law that forbids cross-checking social security numbers against criminal justice (prison) records. Investigators allegedly discovered the scam by accident as they routinely monitored inmate telephone calls.

**11/24/20** State and Federal investigators allege that “more than \$140 million” in pandemic unemployment benefits have been fraudulently paid to California prisoners, including occupants of death row. Families, friends and street gangs are accused of coordinating with inmates to have cash cards sent to external addresses. Proceeds are shared, with some deposited in inmate prison accounts.

**11/3/20** Early releases have plagued Europe’s fight against extremism. Yesterday evening a terrorist armed with an assault rifle unleashed a fusillade of gunfire in Vienna, Austria, killing four and injuring fourteen, six critically. Kujtim Fejzulai, 20, had been sentenced to 22 months last year for trying to join the Islamic state but was granted an early release. [In London](#), a terrorist who was granted early release in 2018 after his conviction in a bomb plot went on a stabbing rampage in London the very next year, killing two before police shot him dead.

**11/2/20** Last November Chicago authorities charged Juan Torkelson with first-degree murder and attempted murder for stabbing one person dead and wounding two others. He was on the loose until May when a police fugitive team found him. But he was released on \$10,000 bond and placed on home detention because of the coronavirus. On October 28 Torkelson pulled a gun on Ohio deputies who stopped him for traffic violations. They took cover and he fled. His whereabouts are unknown.