**Beat: News**

# Michigan State Employee Charged in Over $1 million Unemployment Fraud Scheme

**Antonia Brown of Detroit**

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**USPA NEWS -** Three woman have been charged in a criminal complaint for their alleged role in a $1.6 million dollar unemployment insurance fraud scheme aimed at defrauding the State of Michigan and the U.S. Government of funds earmarked for unemployment assistance during the COVID19 pandemic, announced United States Attorney Dawn N. Ison.

Joining in the announcement were Irene Lindow, Special Agent-in-Charge, Chicago Region, U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General, John R. Pias, Special Agent-in-Charge, Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General, and James A. Tarasca, Special Agent-in-Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Charged were Antonia Brown, age 47, of Detroit, Kiannia Mitchel, age 32 of Romulus, and Angela Johnson, age 47, of Detroit.

According to the criminal complaint, Antonia Brown was employed by the State of Michigan as an Unemployment Insurance Examiner assigned to the Benefit Payment Control Unit. Part of her duties included reviewing, approving and adjudicating various Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) and Unemployment Insurance Assistance (UIA) claims.

As stated in the complaint, starting in March 2020, Kiannia Mitchel and Angela Brown fraudulently filed and/or accessed over 123 PUA claims, resulting in the disbursement of approximately $1.6 million in federal funds earmarked for PUA and UIA benefit payments. The complaint alleges that Brown acted outside the scope of her authority by electronically accessing, altering, and approving approximately 101 of the fraudulent claims which were all associated with Johnson and Mitchell's residences. Mitchel and Johnson are alleged to have received money from third parties to assist them with the claims and paid Brown for her assistance in processing the fraudulent claims.

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.

The investigation is being conducted jointly by the Department of Labor Office of Inspector General, Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation Detroit Area Public Corruption Task Force.

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Wendy writes for the United States Press Agency and is a former columnist with the Fulton County Expositor, Wauseon, Ohio.

Source: Department of Justice, U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of Michigan press release May 18, 2022

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