

STATE OF OHIO  
OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

RANDALL J. MEYER, INSPECTOR GENERAL

REPORT OF  
INVESTIGATION



AGENCY: OHIO DEPARTMENT OF JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES  
FILE ID NO.: 2023-CA00001  
DATE OF REPORT: AUGUST 29, 2024

## The Office of the Ohio Inspector General ... The State Watchdog

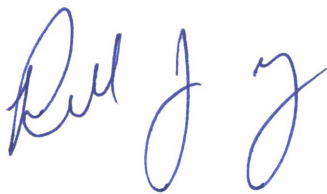
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Randall J. Meyer  
Ohio Inspector General



STATE OF OHIO  
**OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL**

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RANDALL J. MEYER, INSPECTOR GENERAL

## REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

**FILE ID NUMBER:** 2023-CA00001

**SUBJECT NAME/POSITION:** Rashanna Burley  
Former Intermittent Customer Service Representative

Velma Cain  
Former Intermittent Customer Service Representative

Kyson Murphy  
Fraudulent PUA Claimant #13

**AGENCY:** Ohio Department of Job and Family Services

**BASIS FOR INVESTIGATION:** Agency Referral

**ALLEGATIONS:** Fraud Involving Agency and Department Employee

**INITIATED:** January 13, 2023

**DATE OF REPORT:** August 29, 2024

## **INITIAL ALLEGATION AND COMPLAINT SUMMARY**

In January 2022, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) was notified by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, (FBI) of an anonymous report stating that intermittent<sup>1</sup> Customer Service Representative (CSR) Rashanna Burley was authorizing ineligible PUA claims. One year later, on January 13, 2023, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), referred an allegation of wrongdoing by CSR Rashanna Burley to the Office of the Ohio Inspector General. ODJFS alleged that Burley improperly accessed several Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) claims, removed holds or blocks on the claims which she was not authorized to execute, and consequently released ineligible payments to claimants.

## **BACKGROUND**

### *The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services*

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) is responsible for improving the well-being of Ohio's workforce and families by promoting economic self-sufficiency for Ohio's most vulnerable citizens. The department administers various programs that provide public assistance, promote child welfare and facilitate child support payments, provide benefits to the unemployed, and assist individuals in obtaining employment. The department also administers the Medicaid program for the State of Ohio.<sup>2</sup> The ODJFS Office of Unemployment Insurance Operations (ODJFS OUI) is responsible for administering the State of Ohio's Unemployment Insurance Program for workers and businesses. The ODJFS Benefit Payment Control (ODJFS BPC) section is part of ODJFS OUI and is responsible for promoting and maintaining "... the integrity of the Unemployment Insurance Program through the prevention, early detection, investigation, enforcement and recovery of improper unemployment insurance benefits."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Intermittent employees review unemployment claims to assure claimants submit proper identification and meet requirements to receive benefits. Intermittent employees are temporary employees hired for a definite number of hours.

<sup>2</sup> Source: Biennial budget documents.

<sup>3</sup> Source: Benefit Payment Control | Office of Unemployment Insurance Operations | Ohio Department of Job and Family Services.

### *Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Program (PUA)*

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act<sup>4</sup> was a \$2.2 trillion economic stimulus bill passed by the 116th U.S. Congress and was signed into law on March 27, 2020. The CARES Act included provisions for the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) Program. The PUA program provided temporary benefits and support to self-employed individuals, independent contractors, and others who did not qualify for traditional unemployment benefits and had lost work due to COVID-19 related reasons. Additionally, the PUA program provided temporary benefits and support to workers whose earnings averaged less than \$280 per week in their former jobs, and permitted qualified applicants to receive these benefits for up to 39 weeks. The CARES Act stipulated that the distribution of PUA benefits to individuals was to end on December 31, 2020. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the ODJFS Office of Unemployment Insurance Operations (ODJFS OUI) was responsible for the distribution of PUA benefits to qualified individuals in Ohio.

On December 27, 2020, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021,<sup>5</sup> was signed into law and extended the expiration date set by the CARES Act for the payment of PUA benefits to qualified applicants from December 31, 2020, to March 14, 2021. The Act further extended the number of weeks an eligible applicant could receive these benefits from 39 weeks to 50 weeks.

Additionally, to strengthen the integrity of the PUA program, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, amended the CARES Act by:

- Requiring states to verify the identity of applicants.
- Requiring applicants to substantiate employment or self-employment, and wages earned or paid, to confirm eligibility for pandemic unemployment assistance no later than 90 days from the date of application.

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<sup>4</sup> The text of this legislation can be found at: Text - S.3548 - 116th Congress (2019-2020): CARES Act | Congress.gov | Library of Congress.

<sup>5</sup> The text of this legislation can be found at: H.R.133 - 116th Congress (2019-2020): Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 | Congress.gov | Library of Congress.

On March 11, 2021, the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021<sup>6</sup> was signed into law and extended the payment of PUA benefits to qualified individuals from March 14, 2021, to September 6, 2021, and extended the maximum weeks an eligible applicant could receive these benefits from 50 to 70 weeks. The State of Ohio ended the PUA program on September 4, 2021.

During the period when PUA benefits were available for distribution, ODJFS posted on their website<sup>7</sup> the requirement that PUA applicants self-certify that they met a COVID-19 related reason for their unemployment. The U.S. Department of Labor issued guidance and defined PUA eligibility to three groups of people:

- Those previously receiving traditional unemployment benefits who refuse to return to work or refuse an offer of work because the workplace is not in compliance with local, state, or national health and safety standards directly related to COVID-19.
- Those who provide services to an educational institution or educational service agency and are fully or partially unemployed due to COVID-19 related reasons.
- Those who are laid-off or had their work hours reduced due to COVID-19 reasons.

At the very beginning of the pandemic, due to demand and urgency, PUA claims were quickly paid out to claimants with minimal documentation required. As time passed, however, new identity and income verification measures were implemented, requiring claimants to provide additional information to verify eligibility, including retroactive eligibility, for their PUA claims.

ODJFS also used fraud indicators to evaluate whether the documentation uploaded by claimants appeared “fraudulent” or was missing. When a claimant failed to provide all required documentation or provided fraudulent documentation, ODJFS determined the claim ineligible, and subsequently stopped payment on the claim. If a claimant received funds on a claim later determined ineligible, all or a portion of PUA funds received by the claimant were categorized by ODJFS as an “overpayment” and were required to be paid back to the state by the claimant. Should the claimant provide the proper documentation to reconcile the hold on the claim, ODJFS

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<sup>6</sup> The text of this legislation can be found at: H.R.1319 - 117th Congress (2021-2022): American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 | Congress.gov | Library of Congress.

<sup>7</sup> <https://jfs.ohio.gov/ouio/pdf/COVID-19-CARES-Act-Reasons.pdf>

would redetermine the claim as eligible and the PUA funds accrued since the date the claim was held would be released to the claimant in one lump sum.

During a review of ODJFS systems, investigators learned that after a claim was determined ineligible and an overpayment designation was placed on the claim, intermittent or temporary contract employees had the ability to waive all or a portion of the overpayment determination on the claims determined ineligible and/or redetermine the claims as “Eligible.” Investigators learned that intermittent or temporary contract employees were not permitted by ODJFS to “waive” overpayment determinations and/or change the eligibility statuses of claims. However, investigators discovered the ODJFS computer system intermittent or temporary contract employees used to process PUA claims did not prevent them from executing these two tasks without authorization. Investigators identified the following three possible reasons why an intermittent or temporary contract employee may have improperly waived and/or redetermined a PUA claim they were assigned to:

1. Insufficient training of the intermittent or temporary contract employee.
2. Unintentional error executed by the intermittent or temporary contract employee.
3. Intentional action by the intermittent or temporary contract employee to fraudulently waive overpayment and/or redetermine payment of a PUA claim.

During other investigations related to fraudulent PUA claims, the Office of the Ohio Inspector General and ODJFS discovered intermittent or temporary contract employees fraudulently processed PUA claims for family members, friends, and other individuals who were ineligible to receive PUA benefits. In several instances, these intermittent and temporary contract employees received monetary kickbacks from the ineligible claimants for improperly approving their claims and releasing their benefits. These monetary kickbacks were often paid in cash or were sent using digital payment platforms (e.g., Cash App®, Venmo®, Zelle®).

Also, from their review of ODJFS systems, investigators learned ODJFS evaluates submitted PUA claims to ensure that all required documents have been provided and meet the requirements for eligibility to receive benefits. Any claims failing to meet these requirements are not

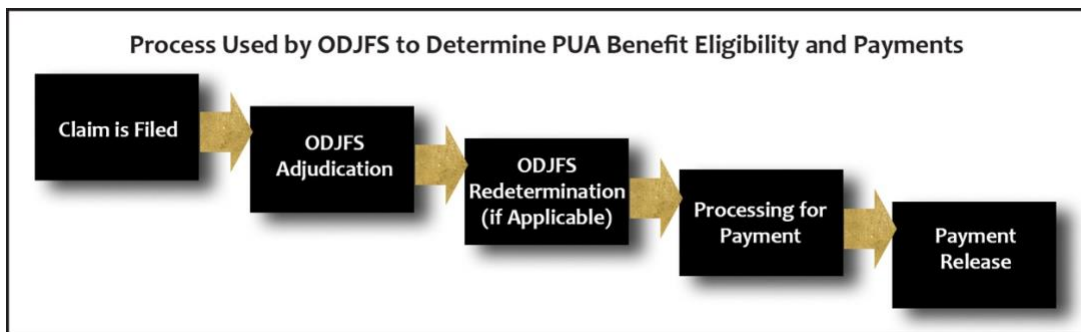
approved for payment and designated as possible fraud. Common reasons why PUA claims are not approved by ODJFS for payment and/or designated as possible fraud are:

- Identity Verification (IDV) – the identity documents provided by the claimant are either insufficient, appear to be fraudulent, or do not match other information provided by the claimant for the claim.
- Employment Evidence Requirement (EMER) – the evidence of employment provided by the claimant is either insufficient, appears to be fraudulent, or does not match wages reported by the claimant for the claim.
- Program Eligibility (PE) – the reason for the claimant’s unemployment status was not related to COVID-19, or the claimant’s lack of availability does not meet eligibility standards.

Claimants are notified by email or United States Postal Service (USPS) mail of the reason(s) for denial of their PUA claims and are asked to provide ODJFS with the necessary documents to validate their claims.

### *PUA Claim Processing*

The basic steps to process a PUA claim are:



- 1) The Claimant Applies for Benefits: This is the initial step in the PUA claims process and requires the claimant to:
  - a) Complete a claim application questionnaire;
  - b) Enter their personal, demographic and work history information;
  - c) Adjust the start date of the claim to be the last date the claimant worked/onset of COVID-19 date. This action is referred to as “backdating;”
  - d) Upload all ODJFS-required documentation into the claims system; and



- e) Submit the claim.
- 2) ODJFS Adjudication: After the claimant submits the claim to ODJFS, the adjudication step is the initial determination made by ODJFS on the claim based on the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the claimant's application and uploaded documents.
- 3) ODJFS Redetermination (if applicable): This is the process used when a claim was initially adjudicated as "Ineligible" and the claimant appeals the initial decision. When this appeal occurs, the claim is sent to either the appeals team or the redetermination team for further review.
- 4) Processing for Payment: Once the claimant is found to be eligible for benefits, ODJFS performs steps to release benefit payments to the claimant by either direct deposit or by "ReliaCard<sup>®</sup>," which is Ohio's unemployment-specific debit card.
- 5) Payment Release: The claimant receives their benefit payment by direct deposit, or the funds are loaded onto their ReliaCard<sup>®</sup> for immediate use.

#### *US Bank ReliaCard<sup>®</sup>*

Ohio claimants have the option of receiving their unemployment benefits as a direct deposit into a current bank account or in the form of a debit card which is issued as a US Bank ReliaCard<sup>®</sup>; Ohio's unemployment-specific debit card. Once ODJFS determines a claim as eligible, ODJFS contacts US Bank ReliaCard<sup>®</sup> who then mails the card to the claimant. ODJFS then deposits the approved benefit amount to the card.

Claimants can make purchases with the US Bank ReliaCard<sup>®</sup> anywhere Visa<sup>®</sup> and Mastercard<sup>®</sup> debit cards are accepted or can withdraw their PUA funds in the form of cash from bank ATMs. The US Bank ReliaCard<sup>®</sup> does not require a personal identification number or PIN for signature-based purchases should the claimant choose credit when making the purchase. However, a PIN is needed for debit card purchases and cash withdrawals from ATMs. The four-digit PIN is created by the cardholder when activating the card.

#### *Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) Investigative Group*

In 2020, because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the increased unemployment of millions of Americans, the PUA program expanded and loosened eligibility unemployment requirements for

recipients. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) received an unprecedented number of unemployment compensation claims, which necessitated ODJFS to hire intermittent and temporary contracted workers to process the claims. In fiscal year 2021, ODJFS disbursed approximately \$7.6 billion in pandemic unemployment benefits and later, ODJFS identified millions of dollars of the disbursements as fraudulent. To address the rampant fraud connected to the PUA program, an investigative group (PUA Investigative Group) was established that consisted of the Office of the Ohio Inspector General; Ohio State Highway Patrol; U.S. Department of Labor – Office of the Inspector General; and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services.

### **APPLICABLE RULES, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES**

#### *Confidentiality of Ohio Department of Job and Family Services' Information*

Ohio Revised Code (ORC) §4141.21 states that, except as provided in ORC §4141.162 and subject to ORC §4141.43,

... the information maintained by the director of job and family services or furnished to the director by employers or employees pursuant to this chapter is for the exclusive use and information of the department of job and family services in the discharge of its duties and shall not be open to the public ... .

As such, the Office of the Ohio Inspector General will not include in this report any of the information obtained during the investigation received by ODJFS in accordance with Ohio Revised Code §4141.21.

### **INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY**

In January 2022, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) was notified by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, (FBI) of an anonymous report stating that intermittent Customer Service Representative (CSR) Rashanna Burley was authorizing ineligible PUA claims. One year later, on January 13, 2023, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), referred an allegation of wrongdoing by CSR Rashanna Burley to the Office of the Inspector General. ODJFS alleged that Burley improperly accessed several Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) claims, removed holds or blocks on the claims which she was not authorized to execute, and consequently released ineligible payments to claimants.

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services hired Burley on December 15, 2020, and she was tasked to review PUA claims assigned to her and verify that all the required documents had been submitted/uploaded to those claims.

ODJFS began auditing all of the 413 claims accessed by Burley and identified 20 claims as fraudulent for various reasons. The ODJFS Internal Fraud team reviewed Burley's activities in the ODJFS Unemployment Framework for Automated Claim & Tax Services (uFACTS). The uFACTS system maintains an audit trail for ODJFS claim files and tracks every instance of access to a claim file, when claim information is added or altered, and identifies the individual performing the actions. The system also tracks every instance when an individual's claim is searched for by claim number, by the claimant's name, or by the claimant's Social Security number. From this audit of Burley's alleged actions, ODJFS identified 20 claims as fraudulent for various reasons and determined Burley improperly released payments for a total amount of \$355,382 in PUA benefit funds to the 20 claims recipients. ODJFS terminated Burley on January 13, 2021.

During their review of PUA claims accessed by Burley, the ODJFS Internal Fraud team also discovered that intermittent CSR Velma Cain had accessed some of the same claims previously accessed by Burley. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services hired Cain on January 19, 2021. After ODJFS discovered the unusual crossover of claims accessed by both Burley and Cain, ODJFS identified Cain as a fraud suspect and she was de-scheduled<sup>8</sup> and her access to the PUA claims system was revoked.

The ODJFS Internal Fraud team conducted an audit of the 7,466 claims accessed by Cain during her employment and identified 123 claims as fraudulent for various reasons. As a result of Cain's fraudulent actions on the 123 claims, ODJFS determined Cain improperly released payments for a total amount of \$1,582,251.50 in PUA benefit funds to the 123 claims recipients. ODJFS terminated Cain on January 4, 2022.

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<sup>8</sup> De-scheduled was the term used when an intermittent or contract employee was no longer scheduled for work hours.

ODJFS explained that a Fraud issue may be triggered when the system detects multiples claims filed with the same email address, mailing address, IP address, phone number, bank account number, or driver's license number. When a Fraud issue is set, a fact-finding questionnaire is sent to the claimant requesting several documents to prove their identity. To clear the Fraud issue, claimants must provide a government-issued photo ID (driver's license, passport, etc.), their Social Security number (SSN card, recent W2 from an employer), proof of legal presence in the United States (birth certificate, passport, certificate of naturalization), and proof of street address listed on the claim (recent utility bill, lease agreement). If the claimant used direct deposit to receive their benefits, they must provide proof of ownership of the bank account listed on the claim.

On January 13, 2023, ODJFS notified the Office of the Ohio Inspector General and other members of the PUA Investigative Group of their findings, and ODJFS provided the completed audits of claims accessed by Burley and Cain.

The Office of the Ohio Inspector General opened an investigation to establish what connections/relationships existed between CSRs Burley and Cain. Investigators selected 12 fraudulent claims accessed by Burley whose claimants had the strongest connection with her. Investigators discovered that many claimants shared the same residential address as Burley or were known associates or relatives of hers. Many of the fraudulent claimants were listed as family members in an obituary for a relative of Burley's. As the investigation evolved, investigators discovered that Velma Cain was Rashanna Burley's biological mother. Also, investigators found that Burley and Kyson Murphy (Claimant #13) had a personal relationship, had children together, and previously lived together at a former address listed for Velma Cain.

## **Unauthorized Actions Taken by Burley and Cain to Approve PUA Benefits for 12**

### **Claimants**

#### *Claimant #1*

On December 16, 2020, Burley accessed in the uFACTS system Claimant #1's claim by Social Security number and by claim number. Burley adjudicated the claim as eligible, without the required documents uploaded to the claim, which improperly released PUA funds to Claimant

#1. The money was paid to the ineligible claimant by direct deposit into the claimant's bank account. Burley then backdated the claim to retroactively release additional weeks of PUA payments. Burley was not trained or authorized by ODJFS to adjudicate fraud issues or backdate claims. Investigators discovered that Claimant #1 had been incarcerated in Warren Correctional Institution since December 29, 2014, and was subsequently ineligible for PUA benefits.

According to ODJFS, the fraudulent actions of Burley resulted in the improper release of \$10,824 in PUA benefit funds to Claimant #1 which was direct deposited into a BOFI<sup>9</sup> Federal bank account.<sup>10 11</sup>

#### *Claimant #2*

On January 7, 2021, Burley accessed in the uFACTS system Claimant #2's claim by name and Social Security number and backdated the claim to March 8, 2020. Burley's actions improperly released PUA funds to a US Bank ReliaCard<sup>®</sup> debit card issued to Claimant #2. Burley was not trained or authorized By ODJFS to backdate claims. Claimant #2 is a Facebook friend of Burley and has the same last name and home address as Claimant #3, and the same home address as Kyson Murphy (Claimant #13). ODJFS reported to investigators that Burley's fraudulent actions resulted in the improper release of \$10,824 in PUA benefit funds to Claimant #2.

#### *Claimant #3*

On December 16, 2020, Burley accessed in the uFACTS system Claimant #3's claim and adjudicated the claim as eligible, without the required documents uploaded to the claim, which improperly released PUA funds to a direct deposit account for Claimant #3. She then backdated the claim to retroactively release additional weeks of payments. Burley was not trained or authorized by ODJFS to adjudicate fraud issues or backdate claims. ODJFS reported to

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<sup>9</sup> BOFI – Bank of Internet.

<sup>10</sup> Rashanna Burley's ODJFS employment pay was direct deposited to a BOFI account and so was Claimant # 4.

<sup>11</sup> Investigators sent a subpoena to BOFI for account information but were informed that BOFI rebranded to Axos Bank. Axos informed investigators that all accounts, "... starting with 800075 was serviced by our former third-party service provider named 'N26.' With [their] headquarters in Germany, they managed prepaid card programs in the US with Axos as their sponsor bank. We provided banking regulations and the listed routing number for N26 to conduct their ACH transactions. Thus, all funds and records were serviced and held solely by N26. Due to a change with their business plans in the beginning of last year, all of their US operations have ceased and returned back to Germany as of January 2022. Unfortunately, we do not have any records or N26 (US-based) contact info to provide."

investigators that Burley's fraudulent actions resulted in the improper release of \$27,573 in PUA benefit funds to Claimant #3.

#### *Claimant #4*

On December 23, 2020, Burley accessed in the uFACTS system Claimant #4's claim by Social Security number and changed the claimant's email address to [raeraebhadd@gmail.com](mailto:raeraebhadd@gmail.com).<sup>12</sup> While in Claimant #4's claim, Burley changed the claimant's password and bank account information to a BOFI account. ODJFS reported to investigators that Burley's fraudulent actions on this claim were identified as an account takeover, and resulted in the improper release of \$19,182 in ineligible PUA funds into the BOFI account Burley fraudulently set up using Claimant #4's Social Security number.

#### *Claimant #5*

On January 7, 2021, Burley accessed in the uFACTS system Claimant #5's claim by Social Security number and by claim number. While in the claim, Burley improperly cleared an identity verification hold by documenting that the "claimant had provided documents to verify identity," when the required documents had not been provided. Burley backdated the claim from June 14, 2020, to March 8, 2020, and changed the email address associated with the claim, allowing her to change the claimant's password. As with her fraudulent actions on Claimant #4's account, Burley committed another account takeover with Claimant #5's account. Burley changed Claimant #5's mailing address to a common address used by five other fraudulent claimants. Burley's actions resulted in the improper release of \$21,672 in PUA funds to a BOFI account for Claimant #5 beginning with #800075. On April 23, 2021, Burley changed Claimant #5's banking information to a Huntington National Bank account and released by direct deposit an additional \$4,890 of PUA funds into that account. Burley then withdrew money from that Huntington National Bank account through Zelle® payments to herself, using some of the funds to pay personal bills.

Due to Burley's improper actions on Claimant #5's claim, an employment verification (EMER) issue was triggered, and the claim was denied by ODJFS on July 20, 2021, which created an

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<sup>12</sup> RaeRae is Burley's Facebook name.

\$8,802 overpayment and prevented any additional PUA payments from being released to Claimant #5. On July 26, 2021, a fraud issue was triggered by ODJFS on Claimant #5's account and further payments were prevented from being issued.

On August 20, 2021, Velma Cain accessed in the uFACTS system Claimant #5's account and created and adjudicated as eligible a Program Eligibility issue (PE). Cain's actions were inconsequential because she created the eligibility issue herself. On July 26, 2021, Cain voided the fraud issue that was triggered by ODJFS. PUA payments for Claimant #5's account remained held because the EMER issue created by Burley's actions in July 2021 was still preventing payments. On August 23, 2021, Cain created a new EMER issue and voided it and voided an overpayment (OP) waiver issue. Cain's actions were inconsequential because she created a new EMER issue but did not resolve the previous EMER issue from Burley's earlier actions which resulted in denial of PUA payments. Cain's actions to void the overpayment waiver failed to release payments. On August 25, 2021, Cain created another new EMER issue and voided it, but again the previously denied EMER issue on the claim had not been resolved. Cain also changed the voided overpayment waiver issue to "pending."

On December 10, 2021, Cain executed the following actions in Claimant #5's claim:

- Cain redetermined a Program Eligibility issue to "eligible." This was the same issue she created and adjudicated eligible on August 20, 2021. Because the issue was already eligible, Cain's action was inconsequential.
- Cain redetermined another Program Eligibility issue, this time from denied to eligible, for the weeks of December 13-26, 2020. These weeks were not eligible for payment because the claimant was only eligible for 39 payable weeks of PUA benefits. No payments were released for these weeks because the claim had a \$0 remaining balance as of December 10, 2021.
- Cain redetermined an Identity issue to eligible, the same one Burley adjudicated eligible for Claimant #5 on January 7, 2021. This was inconsequential because the issue was already eligible. Cain then redetermined Burley's July 2021 denied EMER issue to eligible. Burley's previous EMER issue had prevented more PUA payments to be released to Claimant #5 after July 20, 2021, and created the \$8,802 overpayment. As a

result of the specific action Cain took to redetermine the EMER as eligible, the overpayment for \$8,802 was erased. Cain's action would also have allowed payments for Claimant #5 to be released going forward from the week of May 5, 2021. However, the claim had a \$0 balance by that time and no additional funds were released.

- On December 10, 2021, Cain cancelled the \$8,802 overpayment waiver. This was inconsequential because by redetermining the EMER issue, Cain had already removed this overpayment.

In summary, Burley had taken over Claimant #5's account, backdated the claim, and adjudicated an identity issue to eligible, which resulted in the release of \$26,562 in PUA funds to Claimant #5 that were deposited into the BOFI and Huntington accounts assigned by Burley. ODJFS denied an EMER issue and triggered a Fraud issue in Claimant #5's account. Cain voided the Fraud issue, and redetermined the denied EMER issue to eligible, removing the \$8,802 overpayment on the claim.

#### *Claimant #6*

On December 23, 2020, Burley accessed in the uFACTS system Claimant #6's claim and adjudicated the identity issue to eligible when none of the required identity verification documents had been provided. On December 24, 2020, Burley backdated Claimant #6's PUA claim without obtaining any evidence of eligibility. According to ODJFS, Burley's fraudulent actions resulted in a release of \$28,362 in PUA funds to a ReliaCard® debit card for Claimant #6.

#### *Claimant #7*

Investigators discovered several personal connections between Claimant #7 and Burley. Claimant #7's name was listed on Burley's ODJFS employment application as her emergency contact. Claimant #7 was also mentioned on a post on Burley's Facebook account, and was listed as a relative of Burley in an obituary for Burley's grandmother. Investigators also discovered that Claimant #7 was also a close relative of Cain.

On December 21, 2020, Burley accessed in the uFACTS system Claimant #7's claim by Social Security number. Burley adjudicated an identity verification issue on the claim that was asking



for two forms of identification. Her actions made the claim eligible. ODJFS verified that a driver's license and a Social Security card were submitted on the claim, so the issue was properly reconciled and the claim determined eligible. However, on December 22, 2020, Burley backdated Claimant #7's claim from December 13, 2020, to March 15, 2020, which was not justified and was an action Burley was not authorized to execute. Burley's fraudulent actions resulted in the improper release of \$19,371 in PUA benefit funds to Claimant #7 for the period from March 15, 2020, through December 12, 2020.

On August 19, 2021, Cain accessed Claimant #7's claim and created a Program Eligibility issue which she in turn adjudicated to eligible. Cain's actions were inconsequential because she initially created the eligibility issue herself.

On December 10, 2021, Cain accessed in the uFACTS system Claimant #7's claim and redetermined a denied Program Eligibility (PE) issue for the weeks of December 13-19, 2020, and December 20-26, 2020. The Program Eligibility issue had originally been denied by ODJFS because at that time the PUA program only provided benefits for 39 weeks and Claimant #7 had exhausted their PUA benefit period, making Claimant #7 ineligible for payments for the weeks of December 13-19, 2020, and December 20-26, 2020. However, when Cain redetermined the denied Program Eligibility for Claimant #7 for those two December weeks, the week of December 13-19, 2020, was paid once, and Cain erased a \$189 overpayment for that week. The week of December 20-26, 2020, had not been paid, so Cain released a payment to Claimant #7 of \$189 in PUA benefit payments for that week.

On December 10, 2021, Cain redetermined a denied EMER issue to eligible on Claimant #7's claim. Cain's fraudulent action erased an \$13,281 overpayment and allowed for additional weeks of PUA benefit payments be paid to Claimant #7 for the weeks of July 18, 2021 – September 4, 2021, totaling \$1,323. Cain then performed another improper action to cancel the overpayment for the denied EMER issue, which was inconsequential because the overpayment had already been erased by Cain when she redetermined the EMER to eligible.

In summary, Burley accessed and fraudulently backdated Claimant #7's claim, resulting in the improper release of \$19,371 in retroactive PUA benefit payments from the period of March 15, 2020 – December 12, 2020. Cain accessed Claimant #7's claim and redetermined denied Program Eligibility and EMER issues, fraudulently erasing a \$13,281 overpayment and improperly releasing \$1,323 in new PUA benefit payments. The fraudulent actions taken by both Burley and Cain in Claimant #7's PUA benefit claims resulted in the improper release of a total of \$34,164.

#### *Claimant #8*

On December 22, 2020, Burley accessed in the uFACTS system Claimant #8's claim but took no action. However, Claimant #8 is a close relative of Burley's and has the same last name. According to ODJFS policy, it is an improper action for an ODJFS employee to access the claim of a relative, friend, or anyone with which the employee has done business.

#### *Claimant #9*

On May 28, 2020, a claim was filed for Claimant #9. On December 12, 2020, Burley accessed the claim by the claimant's name but did not take any action on this claim. However, investigators discovered Claimant #9 was a minor and was a close relative of Burley's who has the same last name. According to ODJFS policy, Burley's access of a relative's claim was considered as an improper action. ODJFS did not attribute any fraud involved in this claim and no PUA benefits were released as a result of Burley's action. However, investigators determined that \$12,279 in PUA benefit payments were released into a direct deposit account for Claimant #9. A review showed that actions taken on the claim for Claimant #9 were completed in 2020 from an electronic device with an IP address registered to Burley's home address. The only identification uploaded to the claim was a Social Security card. The Social Security Administration notified investigators that the Social Security number provided for Claimant #9 was not a valid number and no individual was associated with that number.

#### *Claimant #10*

On December 21, 2020, Burley accessed in the uFACTS system Claimant #10's claim by Social Security number and adjudicated a fraud issue as eligible, without obtaining and uploading to the

claim the required identity and employment verification documents. Burley's actions resulted in the improper release of \$32,463 in PUA benefit payments to Claimant #10, which was deposited on a ReliaCard® debit card. Burley's Facebook account revealed a post where Burley identified Claimant #10 as her aunt and wished her a happy birthday on the claimant's birthday.

#### *Claimant #11*

On December 21, 2020, Burley accessed in the uFACTS system Claimant #11's claim by Social Security number and backdated the claim to March 15, 2020. Burley then redetermined the PUA monetary benefit amount to be paid, and adjudicated the identity verification issue to eligible without obtaining and uploading to the claim the required identity verification documents. Burley's fraudulent actions resulted in the improper release of \$32,693 in PUA benefit payments to Claimant #11 on a ReliaCard® debit card. Claimant #11 had been incarcerated in the Belmont Correctional Institution since November 29, 2018. Claimant #11's ReliaCard® was mailed to an address that was used on two other fraudulent claims (claimants #19 & #20) which were manipulated by Velma Cain.

#### *Claimant #12*

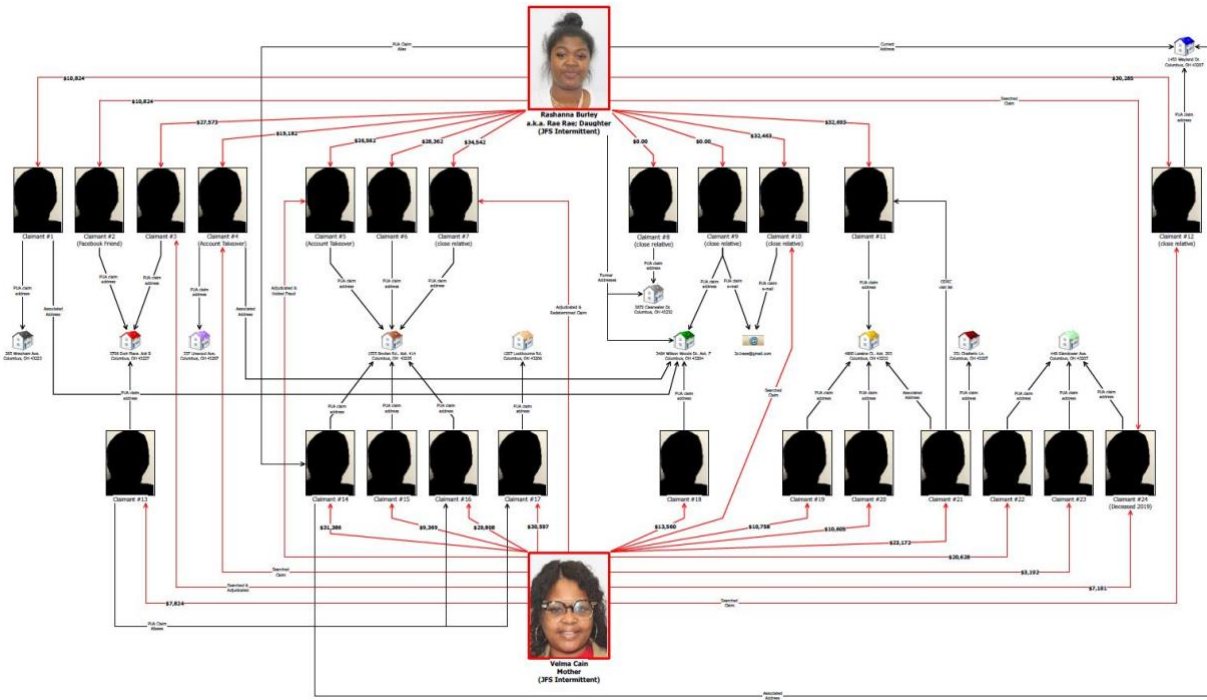
On December 22, 2020, Burley accessed in the uFACTS system Claimant #12's claim by Social Security number and adjudicated the fraud issue to eligible without obtaining and uploading to the claim the required identity and employment verification documents. According to ODJFS, Burley's actions resulted in the improper release of \$30,285 in PUA benefit payments to Claimant #12, which was direct deposited into a bank account. Claimant #12 used Burley's address as their residence on the claim.

### **Additional Unauthorized Actions Taken by Cain to Approve PUA Benefits for 12**

#### **Claimants**

Intermittent ODJFS CSR Velma Cain had accessed some of the same claims previously accessed by Burley. Cain was hired by ODJFS on January 19, 2021, and was terminated on January 4, 2022.

In addition to the 12 claimants previously noted whose PUA claims were fraudulently accessed and improperly acted upon by Burley and Cain, the following are 12 additional claimants having the strongest connection to Burley whose PUA claims Cain fraudulently accessed and conducted improper actions.



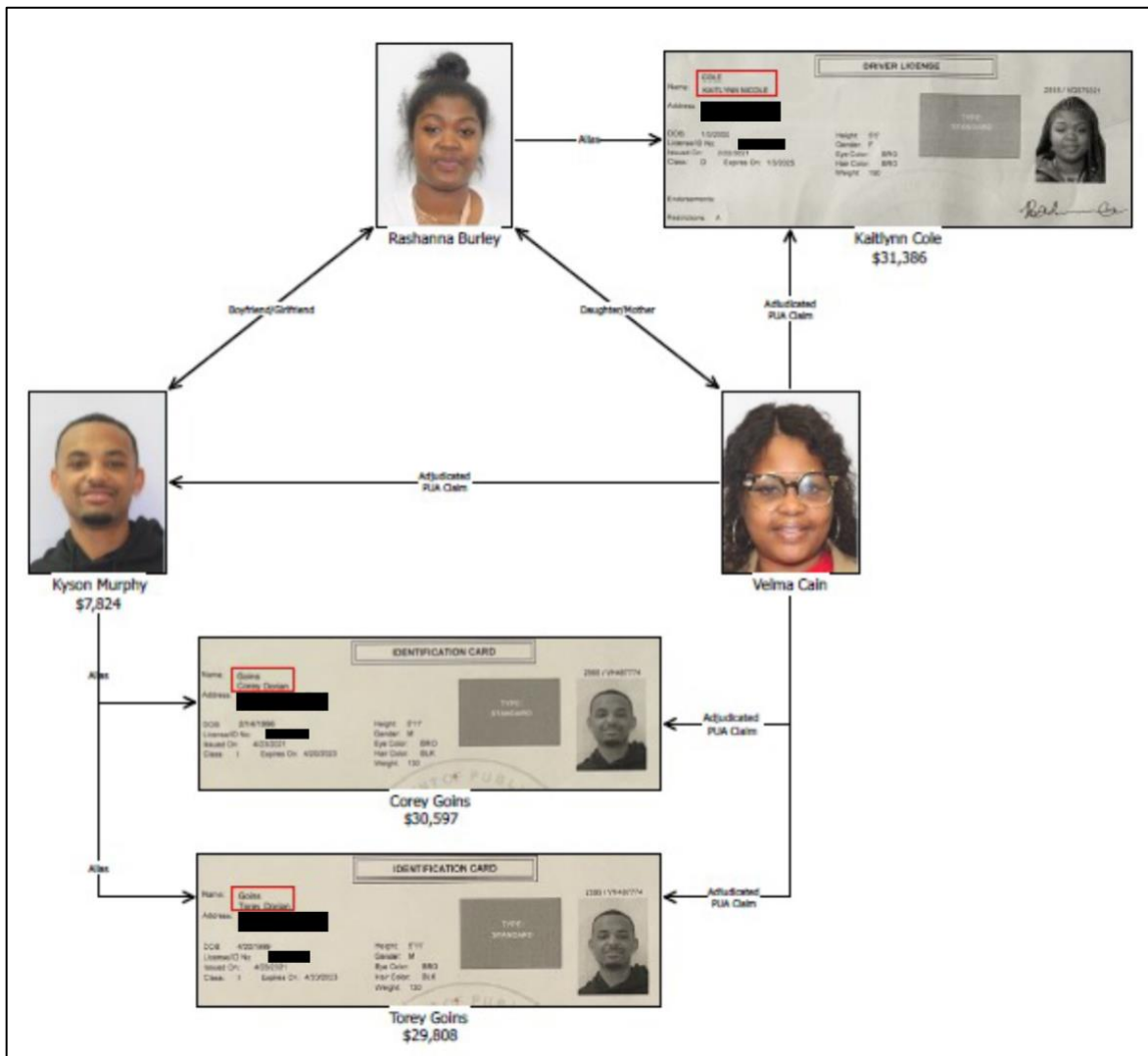
*Claimant #13*

On June 8, 2021, Cain accessed in the uFACTS system Claimant #13’s claim, which was submitted by Kyson Murphy, and Cain ruled an employment verification issue as eligible without obtaining and uploading to the claim the required identification and employment verification documents. Cain’s actions improperly released \$7,824 in PUA benefit payments to Murphy (Claimant #13) on a ReliaCard® debit card which was mailed to an address also used by claimants #2 and #3. ODJFS determined that the pay stub Murphy submitted as an employment verification document on this claim was “fake,” and Ohio Taxation Wage and Earnings records indicated Murphy had not been employed since the third quarter of 2019.

On May 20, 2021, Murphy was involved in a robbery that resulted in a shooting death of one of the victims. On July 12, 2021, Murphy was arrested for aggravated robbery and murder. During the homicide investigation, Murphy’s cellphone was searched which revealed numerous

calls and text messages between Murphy and Rashanna Burley. From a review of these messages, investigators discovered Murphy and Burley had children together.

Investigators also discovered that claimants #16 and #17 were fictitious claimants created by Murphy to collect PUA benefits. Investigators learned that on April 23, 2021, Murphy went to the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles (OBMV) office on two separate occasions claiming to have lost his identification card. After receiving a temporary paper identification card form during each visit to the OBMV, Murphy removed his name from the form and inserted fictitious names and Social Security numbers to create the identities for claimants #16 and #17. Murphy then submitted these fake forms as identification documents for the PUA claims of claimants #16 and #17. No other required documents were submitted.



*Claimant #14*

On February 23, 2021, a claim for Claimant #14 was filed. The following day, on February 24, 2021, Cain accessed this claim in the uFACTS system, backdated the claim to April 5, 2020, redetermined the monetary amount of the claim, updated identity verification issues and adjudicated them as eligible. Cain's fraudulent actions cleared issues which resulted in the release of \$31,386 in PUA benefit payments into a Huntington bank account for Claimant #14. Claimant #14's claim and bank account were in the name of Kaitlynn Cole, which was a fictitious name and the claim listed a fictitious Social Security number. The identity verification submitted for this claim was a temporary paper driver's license form. Investigators found that on February 22, 2021, Rashanna Burley created the identity of Claimant #14, Kaitlynn Cole. Burley went to the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles office claiming to have lost her driver's license. After receiving a paper temporary driver's license form, Burley removed her name and operator's license number from the document and inserted the fictitious name of Kaitlynn Cole, and a fictitious operator's license number. However, Burley failed to remove her photograph, signature, and address from the document. This fictitious form was then submitted as identification for the claim, but no other required documents were submitted.

Huntington bank records for Kaitlynn Cole (fictitious Claimant #14), whose account was created on March 28, 2021, showed ATM withdrawals, counter check withdrawals and electronic payments through Zelle® to Rashanna Burley. An analysis of this Huntington bank account indicated the account was used to receive and send payments to many of the claimants on claims upon which Burley and Cains conducted fraudulent actions.

Also, on September 14, 2023, investigators received the payment records from Shirck orthodontists verifying the debit card for the Huntington bank account in the name of Kaitlynn Cole. These records reveal that on December 6, 2021, Burley used this debit card for a payment of \$252.37 to Shirck orthodontics.

*Claimant #15*

On December 9, 2020, Claimant #15's claim was filed. On February 3, 2021, Cain accessed this claim in the uFACTS system and redetermined a denied identity verification issue to eligible and

noted that, “Claimant provided requested information” when none of the required documents were submitted. Cain was not assigned or authorized to redetermine issues. According to ODJFS, Cain’s actions resulted in the improper release of \$9,369 in PUA funds for Claimant #15 to a ReliaCard® debit card that had been mailed to an address also used by claimants #5, #6, #7, #14, and #16.

#### *Claimant #16*

On April 23, 2021, Kyson Murphy (Claimant #13) created the fictitious identity of Claimant #16, Torey Goins, by going to the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles office claiming to have lost his identification card. After receiving a temporary paper identification card form, Murphy removed his name and address from the form and inserted the fictitious name (Torey Goins) and address and removed his signature under his photograph, leaving the space blank. This fake temporary identification card form was submitted to ODJFS for identity verification of fictitious Claimant #16, but no other required documents were submitted.

On April 27, 2021, Murphy filed a claim for PUA benefits for fictitious Claimant #16 (Torey Goins). On April 28, 2021, Cain accessed the claim in the uFACTS system and adjudicated the identity and employment verifications issues as eligible without obtaining and uploading to the claim the required identity and employment verification documents.

According to ODJFS, Cain’s improper actions resulted in the fraudulent release of \$29,808 in PUA benefits funds to fictitious Claimant #16, which was direct deposited into a Huntington bank account. The Huntington bank records revealed large cash withdrawals and electronic transfers through Zelle® and CashApp® to Rashanna Burley and Claimant #7. The address provided on the Huntington bank account was Burley’s current and former addresses.

#### *Claimant #17*

On March 2, 2021, a claim for PUA benefits was filed for Claimant #17. Cain first accessed this claim in the uFACTS system on April 16, 2021, and on four later dates, at which time she backdated the claim, and adjudicated identity verification and employment verification issues.

On April 23, 2021, Kyson Murphy created the fictitious identity of Claimant #17, Corey Goins, by going to the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles office claiming to have lost his identification card. After receiving a paper temporary identification card form, Murphy removed his name and address from the document and inserted the fictitious name Corey Goins and address, and Murphy removed his signature under his photograph leaving the space blank. This fake temporary paper identification card form was submitted to ODJFS for identification verification, but no other required documents were submitted.

On June 24, 2021, Cain falsely reported that the “Claimant provided all requested information for verification.”

On June 28, 2021, Cain’s fraudulent actions resulted in the release of \$18,396 in PUA benefit payments to a ReliaCard® debit card for fictitious Claimant #17 Corey Goins. According to ODJFS, once Claimant #17’s claim was falsely determined to be eligible, PUA benefit payments totaling \$30,597 continued to be released to fictitious Claimant #17 through the end of the PUA program on September 4, 2021.

#### *Claimant #18*

On June 17, 2020, a claim for PUA benefits was filed for Claimant #18. This claim listed that Claimant #18 had the same Huntington bank account number as Claimant #5 and the same home address as Burley. On December 17, 2021, Cain accessed Claimant #18’s claim, cleared the employment verification issue by falsely reporting that the “Claimant provided all requested information for verification.” Cain also voided an Overpayment Recovery Waiver, noting “No Overpayment Due.” According to ODJFS, Cain’s fraudulent actions resulted in the improper release of \$29,529 in PUA benefits to Claimant #18.

#### *Claimant #19*

On February 11, 2021, a claim for PUA benefits was filed for Claimant #19. Cain accessed this claim in the uFACTS system on five different dates. On April 1, 2021, Cain adjudicated the fraud hold on the claim and the identity verification issue by noting that, “Claimant returned requested information.” However, no required documents had been submitted and uploaded to



the claim, and Cain's fraudulent actions resulted in the improper release of \$10,758 in PUA benefit funds issued on a ReliaCard® debit card to Claimant #19, which was sent to an address also used by claimants #11 and #20.

*Claimant #20*

On February 16, 2021, a claim for PUA benefits was filed by Claimant #20. The following day, on February 17, 2021, Cain adjudicated a fraud hold and identity verification issue on this claim without obtaining and uploading to the claim any required documentation from the claimant. According to ODJFS, Cain's fraudulent actions resulted in the release of \$10,605 in PUA benefit funds issued on a ReliaCard® debit card to Claimant #20, which was sent to an address also used by claimants #11 and #19.

*Claimant #21*

On May 20, 2020, a claim for PUA benefits was filed for Claimant #21. On December 10, 2021, Cain adjudicated this claim as eligible after ODJFS had determined the claim to be fraudulent because a fake paycheck was submitted as employment verification. Cain also voided an overpayment waiver on the claim. According to ODJFS, Cain's fraudulent actions resulted in the release of \$23,172 in PUA benefit funds issued on a ReliaCard® debit card to Claimant #21. Claimant #21's claim listed a previous address that was the same address listed for claimants #11, #19 and #20. Claimant #21 was also on the visitor list of Claimant #11, who was a current inmate at an ODRC facility.

*Claimant #22*

On July 25, 2020, a claim for PUA benefits was filed for Claimant #22. On April 1, 2021, Cain adjudicated this claim and removed a fraud hold, noting that the "Claimant provided requested information" when only a driver's license had been submitted. Claimant #22 was a relative of Claimant #21 and her address was the same as Claimant #24, who was a deceased relative of Cain.

### *Claimant #23*

On April 16, 2021, a claim for PUA benefits was filed for Claimant #23. No required identity or employment documents were obtained and uploaded to this claim. However, on April 20, 2021, Cain adjudicated the identity and employment verification issues. Cain noted in the claim that the “Claimant provided requested information.” According to ODJFS, Cain’s action resulted in the release of \$3,192 in PUA benefit funds issued on a ReliaCard® debit card to Claimant #23 that was sent to the same address as claimants #22 and #24.

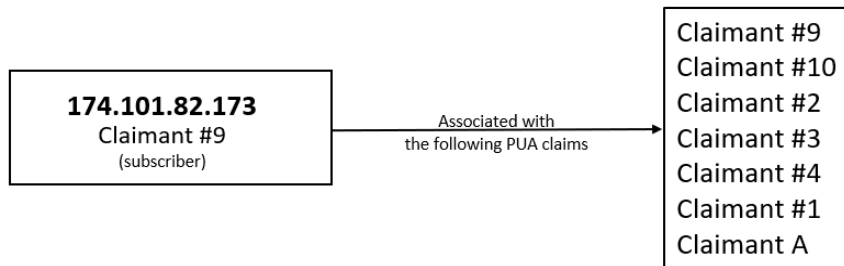
### *Claimant #24*

On July 15, 2020, a claim for PUA benefits was filed for Claimant #24. On January 22, 2021, Cain adjudicated this claim by backdating the claim to May 3, 2020, and redetermining the monetary amount. According to ODJFS, Claimant #24 was a relative of Cain and had been deceased since July 31, 2019. Cain’s fraudulent actions resulted in the release of \$7,101 in PUA benefit funds issued on a ReliaCard® debit card to Claimant #24 that was sent to the same address as claimants #22 and #23.

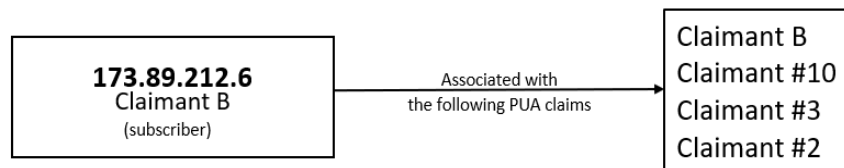
### ***Connections by IP Addresses of Electronic Devices Used to File Fraudulent Claims***

Investigators also reviewed the Internet Protocol (IP) address history of the electronic devices used to file the fraudulent PUA claims that were captured by ODJFS throughout the PUA claims process. Investigators searched and reviewed IP addresses that were used to access the PUA claims and were connected to Burley and/or Cain. From this review, investigators determined:

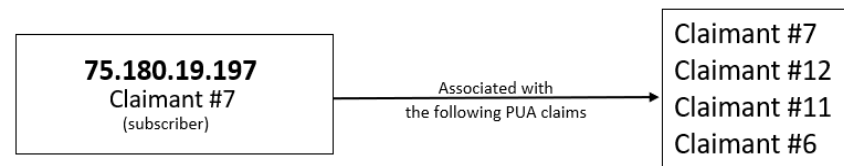
- An electronic device with an IP address of *174.101.82.173* was used to access the PUA claims of claimants #1, #2, #3, #4, #9 and #10. Investigators subpoenaed the internet service provider for subscriber details, which revealed that the subscriber of the IP address was a known alias for Claimant #9. The service address for this IP address was also the same residential address as Burley at the time of use on the multiple claims. Additionally, the subpoena also revealed that one of the email addresses associated with this IP address was the same email address utilized by Claimant #9 on her PUA claim. Claimant #9 was a minor, and was a close relative of Burley and Cain.



- An electronic device with an IP address of *173.89.212.6* was used to access the PUA claims of claimants #2, #3, #10 and another known claimant (Claimant B). Burley accessed Claimant B’s PUA claim on December 23, 2020, by searching the claimant’s name, then backdated the claim, which she was not trained or authorized to do. This action resulted in the release of \$6,879 of PUA benefit funds to Claimant B.



- An electronic device with an IP address of *75.180.19.197* was used to access the PUA claims of claimants #6, #7, #11, and #12. Investigators subpoenaed the internet service provider for subscriber details, which revealed that the subscriber of the IP address was Claimant #7. Claimant #7 is a close relative of Burley.



**Electronic Communications**

Investigators obtained electronic messages between Burley and her friends discussing PUA benefits. Most of the messages where Burley was offering to file PUA claims for individuals for a fee occurred prior to Burley’s employment date at ODJFS, which was December 15, 2020.

## **Cain Interview**

On June 13, 2023, investigators interviewed Velma Cain at her residence regarding her employment as an intermittent customer service representative at ODJFS. Cain stated she was working as an intermittent employee for almost one year from January 2020 to January 2021. Cain told investigators that when she was hired, she was issued an ODJFS computer and a login username and password. Cain confirmed that she received training from ODJFS through TEAMS<sup>13</sup> trainings and told investigators that she did not share her computer or username and password with anyone. Cain confirmed to investigators that she had been advised by ODJFS that she was not permitted to access claims of relatives or friends and denied viewing or accessing any claims of people she knew.

Cain explained that in the initial period of her employment, she was tasked with reviewing PUA claims assigned to her from a spreadsheet to assure that all the required documents had been submitted for the claims. Cain said that later in her employment at ODJFS, she was assigned to review PUA claims for fraudulent documents and noted that she had observed multiple cases of fraud. Cain told investigators that she had seen several obviously fraudulent documents including W-2s, passports, and driver's licenses. Cain also stated that she had observed several claims that included "fake IDs," in which the same individual's picture was displayed in multiple IDs, but each ID would have a different name listed as their identity. Cain told investigators said she could not recall the names of those claimants.

Investigators asked Cain if she knew Kyson Murphy and she confirmed that she did. Cain explained that Murphy and her daughter Rashanna Burley had children together. Cain admitted that at one point Murphy and Rashanna had resided with her at her house when she lived on Bulen Ave. in Columbus.

Investigators showed Cain a chart that displayed a picture of Kyson Murphy and two different temporary Ohio driver's license forms that had Murphy's picture on both of them but listed the names of claimants #16 and #17. Cain denied having seen those driver's license forms prior to her interview. Investigators asked Cain why she would improperly process for payment PUA

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<sup>13</sup> Microsoft TEAMS is an application that allows multiple people to communicate as a group.

claims when the required documents submitted (temporary Ohio driver's license forms) showed evident irregularities, with Kyson Murphy's picture on both forms but different names listed as identities. Cain told investigators that she no longer wanted to talk and refused to continue with the interview. Cain told investigators during her interview that Burley was staying on the west side of Columbus but that she did not know the address.

On June 20, 2023, Velma Cain called to notify investigators that her attorney was on vacation but would call them upon her return. Several contacts were made by investigators with Cain's attorney to arrange a possible continuation of the interview with Cain, and each time the attorney stated she would notify investigators if she and her client (Cain) wished to continue the interview.

On July 5, 2023, investigators drove to the last known residence of Burley, but there was no answer at the door.

### **Murphy Interview**

On July 5, 2023, investigators interviewed Kyson Murphy at the Franklin County Jail. After being read his Miranda warning, Murphy declined to be interviewed.

### **Burley Interview**

On August 23, 2023, after locating a new home address for Rashanna Burley, investigators interviewed her at her residence regarding her employment with ODJFS. Burley stated she was unsure of the exact dates of her ODJFS employment but estimated her employment to be from December 2020 to January 2021. Burley explained that after her ODJFS training for her position as an intermittent customer service representative, she was assigned to work from a queue or spreadsheet, reviewing PUA claims to determine if all the required documentation had been properly submitted by claimants. Burley stated that if all the required documents were not submitted, she would post a note on the claim identifying what documents were missing. Burley told investigators that she worked from home using the laptop computer provided by ODJFS. Burley stated that she was authorized to remove the fraud designation or holds on a claim if the

required documents had been properly submitted by the claimant. Burley told investigators she was terminated from her position at ODJFS because she was sick and had requested time off.

Burley admitted that Velma Cain was her mother, Kyson Murphy was the father of a couple of her children and that Claimant #9 was a relative. Burley told investigators that she did not recall being informed by ODJFS that she was not permitted to access or work on claims of people she knew or was related to. When asked about Kaitlynn Cole (fictitious Claimant #14), Burley stated she did not know the person. When investigators showed Burley the OBMV temporary driver's license form that she received on February 22, 2021, with Kaitlynn Cole's name but Burley's picture, address, and signature on it, she said, "that's not me." Burley then said, "I'm done with the conversation," and the interview was ended.

## **CONCLUSION**

In 2020, because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the increased unemployment of millions of Americans, Congress passed various programs to address the crisis, including the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program. The PUA program expanded and loosened eligibility unemployment requirements for recipients. Consequently, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services' Office of Unemployment Insurance Operations (ODJFS OUI) was the agency responsible for the distribution of PUA benefits to qualified individuals in Ohio, and received an unprecedented number of unemployment compensation claims. This increase in claims necessitated ODJFS to hire intermittent and temporary contracted workers to process the claims. In fiscal year 2021, ODJFS disbursed approximately \$7.6 billion in pandemic unemployment benefits and later, ODJFS identified millions of dollars of the disbursements as fraudulent. The State of Ohio ended the PUA program on September 4, 2021.

On or around January 4, 2022, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) was notified by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) of an anonymous report that ODJFS Intermittent Customer Service Representative (CSR) Rashanna Burley had improperly cleared issues on previously denied Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) claims which released funds to ineligible claimants. Burley was hired as an ODJFS intermittent CSR on December 15,

2020, to review PUA claims assigned to her and to determine if all the required documentation had been properly submitted for processing the PUA claim.

ODJFS received notification from the FBI of Burley's alleged actions, and the ODJFS Internal Fraud team conducted an audit of the 413 claims Burley accessed during her employment. The ODJFS Internal Fraud team reviewed Burley's activities in the ODJFS Unemployment Framework for Automated Claim & Tax Services (uFACTS). From this audit of Burley's alleged actions, ODJFS identified 20 claims as fraudulent for various reasons and determined Burley improperly released payments for a total amount of \$355,382 in PUA benefit funds to the 20 claims recipients. ODJFS terminated Burley on January 13, 2021.

While auditing PUA claims accessed by Burley, ODJFS also discovered that intermittent CSR Velma Cain had accessed some of the same claims previously accessed by Burley. Cain was hired as an intermittent CSR on January 19, 2021. After ODJFS discovered the unusual crossover of claims accessed by both Burley and Cain, ODJFS identified Cain as a fraud suspect and she was de-scheduled and her access to the PUA claims system was revoked. ODJFS evaluated and audited all 7,466 PUA claims Cain had accessed and identified 123 claims as fraudulent. As a result of Cain's fraudulent actions, a total amount of \$1,582,251.50 was improperly released for payment to individuals on the 123 fraudulent claims identified. Cain was terminated from her employment with ODJFS on January 4, 2022.

On January 13, 2023, ODJFS referred the matter and reported their findings to the Ohio Inspector General and other members of the PUA Investigative Group. Investigators discovered that Velma Cain was Rashanna Burley's mother and that many of the claimants were friends and relatives of Cain and Burley. Investigators also discovered that Kyson Murphy (fraudulent Claimant #13) and Burley have children together and at one point lived in the same house with Cain. Investigators reviewed Murphy's PUA claim and found that on June 8, 2021, Cain had accessed in the uFACTS system Claimant #13's claim, which was submitted by Kyson Murphy, and Cain ruled an employment verification issue as eligible without obtaining and uploading to the claim the required identification and employment verification documents. Cain's actions improperly released \$7,824 in PUA benefit payments to Murphy on a ReliaCard® debit card

which was mailed to an address also used by claimants #2 and #3. ODJFS determined that the pay stub Murphy submitted as an employment verification document on this claim was “fake,” and Ohio Taxation Wage and Earnings records indicate Murphy had not been employed since the third quarter of 2019. On May 20, 2021, Murphy was involved in a robbery that resulted in a shooting death of one of the victims. On July 12, 2021, Murphy was arrested for aggravated robbery and murder. During the homicide investigation, Murphy’s cellphone was searched which revealed numerous calls and text messages between Murphy and Rashanna Burley.

In addition to the \$7,824 Murphy had received from his own fraudulent PUA claim, investigators also found three fictitious PUA claimants that Burley and Murphy created, submitting fictitious names and Social Security numbers as required identity documentation for the processing of PUA claims. Cain then improperly cleared the claims of those fictitious claimants as eligible, releasing funds to bank accounts accessed by Burley and Murphy.

**Accordingly, the Office of the Ohio Inspector General finds reasonable cause to believe that wrongful acts or omissions occurred in these instances.**

**RECOMMENDATION(S)**

The Office of the Ohio Inspector General has determined that no recommendations are warranted for this report of investigation.

**REFERRAL(S)**

The report was previously referred to the Franklin County Prosecuting Attorneys. On August 28, 2024, Rashanna Burley, Velma Cain, and Kyson Murphy were indicted by a Franklin County grand jury for various offenses including engaging in a pattern of corrupt activity, theft, telecommunications fraud, theft in office, tampering with records, and money laundering.

The Office of the Ohio Inspector General is referring this report of investigation to the Ohio Auditor of State for consideration.





STATE OF OHIO  
**OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL**

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RANDALL J. MEYER, INSPECTOR GENERAL

**NAME OF REPORT: Ohio Department of Job & Family Services**

**FILE ID #: 2023-CA00001**

**KEEPER OF RECORDS CERTIFICATION**

**This is a true and correct copy of the report which is required to be prepared by the Office of the Ohio Inspector General pursuant to Section 121.42 of the Ohio Revised Code.**

**Jill Jones**  
**KEEPER OF RECORDS**

**CERTIFIED**  
**August 29, 2024**

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