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Portland Man Sentenced to 3 ½ Years for Identity Theft and Benefits Fraud

Portland, Maine: United States Attorney Thomas E. Delahanty II, announced that on February 15, 2012, United States District Judge George Z. Singal sentenced **Besouro Abdul Zagon**, 52, of Portland, also known as **Donald Benjamin**, to 3 ½ years of imprisonment for theft of government housing, medical care, food and education benefits, passport fraud, Social Security fraud, and aggravated identity theft. Judge Singal also ordered **Zagon** to serve 1 year of supervised release and to pay \$198,000 in restitution. The convictions were based on a 25-year course of conduct in which **Zagon** used the identity of an actual United States citizen.

According to court records, **Zagon** was born **Donald Benjamin** in Antigua in 1959. He entered the United States in the early 1980s. In the mid-1980's, **Zagon** assumed the victim's identity in Massachusetts, and continued doing so for the past 11 years in Maine. He legally changed his name to **Zagon** in 1991. **Zagon** used the victim's identity to fraudulently obtain 3 United States passports and a Social Security number, and to fraudulently obtain about \$198,000 worth of government benefits, including federal financial assistance with housing, health care, nutrition and education.

At the sentencing, the victim described how **Zagon's** use of his identity made it impossible for him to get a business loan and credit, leading to the loss of his business; forced him obtain an adjustable, rather than a fixed, rate mortgage, leading to the foreclosure of his home; caused him to be billed for education loans he did not take out, and resulted in the suspension of his driver's license for violations he did not commit. The victim also described the frustration he experienced from years of trying to clear his name.

The investigation was conducted by the United States Departments of State, Diplomatic Security Service; Homeland Security, Immigrations and Customs Enforcement; Health and Human Services; Housing and Urban Development; Agriculture, the Social Security Administration, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Maine Department of Health and Human Services.

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