



**Former Amtrak employee pleads guilty to wire fraud after bilking customers of more than \$23,000 for phony Amtrak trip to New York City**

**For Immediate Release**

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NEW ORLEANS — A former Amtrak employee pleaded guilty to two counts of wire fraud on February 23, 2022, in part for inventing a phony New York City Amtrak trip and bilking customers out of approximately \$23,000 to \$26,000 in payments for the fake trip.

According to [court documents](#), one wire fraud charge is related to a scheme in which Kenya Butler-Small, a former On-board Services Train Attendant, recruited more than 40 individuals to purchase spots on what she described as a group trip to New York City that included related activities such as shows and museum visits. Butler-Small allegedly charged each victim prices ranging from \$250 to \$425 for the fake trip.

Butler-Small claimed that the trip would leave New Orleans at midnight on June 21, 2019, but she never booked such a trip despite telling victims that she had done so. When the date of the trip approached, Butler-Small falsely claimed that Amtrak canceled the trip when a passenger booked for the trip assaulted an Amtrak employee and issued a bomb threat.

The other wire fraud charged is related to a scheme in which Butler-Small submitted fraudulent sick benefit claims to the Railroad Retirement Board, claiming she was too sick to work. In truth, Butler-Small was working another job when she claimed to be sick. She received approximately \$4,679 in sick benefits as a result.

A sentencing hearing is scheduled for June 15, 2022. The maximum penalties for each count of wire fraud are up to 20 years imprisonment, up to three years of supervised release, a fine of up to \$250,000, and a \$100 mandatory special assessment fee.

The case was investigated by Amtrak OIG and the Railroad Retirement Board OIG. More information is available in the press release from the U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of Louisiana: <https://direc.to/htQJ>.

Reports of fraud, waste, or abuse; criminal or unethical acts affecting Amtrak's property or operations; or mismanagement in Amtrak programs or operations can be made 24 hours a day, seven days a week via the Amtrak OIG Hotline at 1-800-468-5469 or online at <https://amtrakoig.gov/report-fraud-waste-abuse>.

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