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Illinois Church Action on Alcohol & Addiction Problems

Marijuana Alert - March 21, 2023



HOW AN OUT-OF-STATE POT FIRM USED A SHOOTING VICTIM IN A BID TO SCORE SOCIAL EQUITY LICENSES IN ILLINOIS

As Edna Patterson recovered from being shot a second time, she started searching for a job and came across an offer on Craigslist that sounded too good to be true.

“Interested in a quick \$2,000?” read an ad placed by Canna Zoned MLS, a Michigan firm seeking people who meet the social equity criteria for cannabis permits in Illinois and who could be placed on applications.

To earn that initial payment, the ad asked respondents to provide certain private records to prove they qualified: tax and medical documents, pay stubs, and a driver’s license, among other things. It promised another \$20,000 to anyone awarded one of the permits — without mentioning the 51% stake social equity applicants are required to hold in a company to score a license.

Patterson, 26, who lives on Chicago’s East Side, said she initially “thought it was a scam” when she came across the ad in February. Ultimately, she said she was lured by the promise of easy money and encouraged to follow through by Amanda Kilroe, an attorney for Canna Zoned.

Patterson sent documents proving she was a victim of gun violence, a new way to earn social equity status in an upcoming licensing round for 55 pot shops. She later received an electronic transfer of \$2,000.

But she also signed a contract that could potentially make her a

front person. The contract states that she would be listed as a company's majority owner on an application but would then have to sell her lucrative share for just \$1 if a license is awarded.

When she signed the contract, she said she was just excited to potentially earn the additional \$20,000 and get a job at the dispensary. Told a license could be worth millions of dollars, she said she's not sure what to think now.

"I don't so much feel cheated, but I don't really know," she said. "... I don't know how special [a license] is to them, I don't know how valuable this is."

She added: "I'm just a name to them." [READ](#)

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www.ilcaap.org
1132 W Jefferson
Springfield, IL 60702

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