

5 Defendants Arrested on Complaints Alleging They Submitted Fraudulent Claims Seeking FEMA Funds for Wildfire Disaster Relief

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For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Central District of California

LOS ANGELES – Five defendants have been arrested on federal criminal complaints alleging they fraudulently obtained federal disaster-relief funds by falsely claiming their properties were damaged in the wildfires that struck Los Angeles County in January 2025, the Justice Department announced today.

The allegedly false claims were made in the wake of the Eaton and Palisades fires that started on January 7. Together, the wildfires burned nearly 60,000 acres, destroyed more than 16,000 structures, and resulted in the deaths of 30 people. As a result, the President approved a Major Disaster Declaration, which prompted the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to develop a program to provide financial assistance to fire victims.

Victims of the Eaton and Palisades fires, including renters who lost their residences, could qualify for a one-time payment of \$750 noted as a FEMA relief payment, \$43,600 for other needs assistance (personal property, transportation, medical, etc.), and housing assistance for up to 18 months at varying rates. Homeowners are also potentially eligible for additional relief up to \$43,600 for home repair.

Each defendant listed below – four of whom were arrested on Thursday; one of whom was in state custody in Arizona on Wednesday – is charged with fraud in connection with major disaster or emergency benefits, which carries a statutory maximum sentence of 30 years in federal prison.

- ***United States v. Hogan***

Deannah Hogan, 32, of Compton, on January 26 allegedly submitted a false claim for federal disaster assistance related to the Palisades Fire, listing an address in the Pacific Palisades neighborhood of Los Angeles as the purportedly damaged dwelling in which she claimed to live and rent. After approving the

application, FEMA sent a total of approximately \$17,351 to Hogan, including for personal property damage and displacement assistance.

The actual Pacific Palisades homeowner –and resident who lost the property in the fire –later confirmed to law enforcement that the property was not being rented out at that time.

Hogan was arrested and made her initial appearance Thursday in U.S. District Court in Los Angeles. A federal magistrate judge ordered her released on \$10,000 bond. Her arraignment is scheduled for May 20.

Assistant United States Attorney Solomon Kim of the Major Frauds Section is prosecuting this case.

- **[United States v. Johnson](#)**

Delvonne Dashon Johnson, 31, of the East Hollywood area of Los Angeles, on February 4 allegedly submitted a fraudulent claim for FEMA benefits related to the Palisades Fire, listing an address in Pacific Palisades as his purported dwelling that he owned. Later in February 2025, FEMA sent Johnson a total of approximately \$64,138 in federal disaster relief.

On April 2, law enforcement interviewed the property's actual owner, who stated she had lived at that residence since 2015, that it was her primary residence, and she was living there at the time of the Palisades Fire. She also said she never rented the property out to anyone and did not know Johnson. She further said when she submitted a disaster assistance application to advise authorities that her house had been destroyed, FEMA notified her that someone already filed such a claim on her property's behalf.

Johnson was arrested Thursday and is scheduled to make his initial appearance this afternoon in U.S. District Court in downtown Los Angeles.

Assistant United States Attorney Steven M. Arkow of the Major Frauds Section is prosecuting this case.

- **[United States v. Lowe](#)**

Keandre Lowe, 21, of Long Beach, on January 22 allegedly submitted a fraudulent claim for FEMA benefits, claiming that he rented an Altadena property that was destroyed in the Eaton Fire. By February 13, FEMA had submitted approximately \$28,286 in disaster relief to Lowe.

The actual property owner later confirmed to law enforcement that they were residing in the home at the time and since 2007 had not rented the property out to anyone.

Lowe was arrested and made his initial appearance Thursday in U.S. District Court in Los Angeles. A federal magistrate judge ordered him released on \$10,000 bond. Lowe's arraignment is scheduled for May 27.

Assistant United States Attorney Steven M. Arkow of the Major Frauds Section is prosecuting this case.

- **[United States v. McIntre](#)**

Zenalyn McIntre, 38, of Sherman Oaks, on January 20 allegedly submitted a false claim for federal disaster relief by claiming that she was a renter of a residence in Pacific Palisades that was destroyed in the Palisades Fire. Eight days later, she submitted additional documents online to FEMA, including her California driver's license –which listed a Sherman Oaks address –and a natural gas utility bill that appeared to be fake.

Based on her false claim, FEMA distributed approximately \$25,229 in disaster-relief funds to McIntre.

McIntre was arrested Thursday and is scheduled to make her initial appearance this afternoon in U.S. District Court in Los Angeles.

Assistant United States Attorney Sarah S. Lee of the Major Frauds Section is prosecuting this case.

- **United States v. Woods**

Katrina Woods, 33, of Maricopa, Arizona, on January 30 allegedly submitted a fraudulent claim for disaster assistance, listing a nonexistent Altadena address as her primary residence that purportedly was destroyed in the Eaton Fire.

FEMA eventually disbursed approximately \$23,441 in disaster relief to Woods, who also made reservations through FEMA to stay at two hotels – one in downtown Los Angeles, the other in Hawthorne – during February and March of 2025 paid for by FEMA. On March 10, FEMA discontinued lodging for Woods at the hotel in downtown Los Angeles where she was staying.

Woods has been in state custody in Arizona since Wednesday on an unrelated matter and is expected to make her initial appearance in federal court in the coming weeks.

Assistant United States Attorney Steven M. Arkow of the Major Frauds Section is prosecuting this case.

Complaints contain allegations of criminal conduct. All defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

One defendant [arrested last month](#), Hedeshia Robertson, 36, of Lakewood, is scheduled to plead guilty on May 2 to one count of fraud in connection with major disaster or emergency benefits. Robertson admitted in her plea agreement that she filed a fraudulent application for FEMA benefits on January 28, seeking disaster relief for a Pacific Palisades property that she neither owned nor rented. As a result of her fraudulent application, Robertson fraudulently obtained approximately \$24,899 in FEMA benefits.

Assistant United States Attorneys Scott Paetty and Roger Hsieh of the Major Frauds Section are prosecuting this case.

Another defendant, Jaime Arturo Carrillo, 48, of South Los Angeles, pleaded guilty on Wednesday to one count of fraud in connection with major disaster or emergency benefits. On January 13, Carrillo falsely stated to FEMA on an application for wildfire-relief benefits that he rented property in South Los Angeles – approximately 20 miles from the Palisades and Eaton fires – and had suffered personal property damage and a disruption in his utilities. Carrillo was not renting at the South Los Angeles residence.

As a result of Carrillo's false statements, FEMA authorized him to receive transitional sheltering assistance. Using these benefits, Carrillo received free lodging for 13 nights at two Los Angeles County hotels, with a total cost of approximately \$2,173. Carrillo also charged approximately \$107 to the room paid for by FEMA at an El Segundo hotel for food and incidental costs.

Carrillo's sentencing hearing is scheduled for June 11.

Assistant United States Attorney Elizabeth S.P. Douglas of the Major Frauds Section is prosecuting this case.

The cases announced today were investigated by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General and Homeland Security Investigations' (HSI) El Camino Real Financial Crimes Task Force, a multi-agency task force that includes federal and state investigators who are focused on financial crimes in Southern California, including the Small Business Administration Office of Inspector General (SBA-OIG).

To report fraud related to FEMA disaster-relief public assistance, please contact the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General (DHS-OIG) hotline at (800) 323-8603. The HSI tip line may be contacted at (866) 347-2423.

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