

## Rental Assistance Fraud Cases

Five former Miami-Dade Housing Agency (Miami-Dade) housing recipients were arrested on probable cause or charged in the Florida Circuit Court, **Miami, FL**, with allegedly committing grand theft. In addition, former Miami-Dade housing recipients Robinson and Phillip Dukes, Carolyn Nesmith, and Melinda Hughes were collectively sentenced to 20 years probation and 15 years supervised release and ordered to pay HUD \$123,614 in restitution for their earlier guilty pleas to committing grand theft. Between 1993 and 2007, the above defendants allegedly and Robinson and Phillip Dukes, Nesmith, and Hughes admittedly failed to report income or accurate household composition on housing certifications and collectively obtained \$253,984 in housing assistance they were not entitled to receive.

Six former Indianapolis Housing Agency Section 8 tenants were each charged in Marion County Court, **Indianapolis, IN**, with allegedly committing theft and welfare fraud. From 2005 to 2009, the above defendants allegedly failed to report income, unauthorized residents, duplicate housing assistance, or their criminal histories on housing certifications and collectively obtained more than \$200,000 in housing assistance they were not entitled to receive.

Gwendolyn Fisk, Yousha Wheeler, Ernestina Martinez, and Mary Murillo, former Hawthorne Housing Authority (Hawthorne) Section 8 tenants and a landlord, were each charged in Los Angeles County Superior Court, **Los Angeles, CA**, with allegedly committing grand theft and perjury and offering or attempting to offer a false instrument for recording. In addition, former Hawthorne Section 8 tenant Cathy McClain was sentenced to 270 days incarceration and 3 years probation and ordered to perform 30 days of community service and pay Hawthorne \$15,358 in restitution for her earlier guilty plea to committing grand theft. Between August 2003 and January 2010, the above defendants allegedly and McClain admittedly failed to report income, accurate household composition, or their familial relationship with their Section 8 landlord on housing or other certifications and together obtained \$129,019 in housing and \$16,514 in other assistance they were not entitled to receive.

Patricia Stroud and Herman Angel, former New York City Housing Preservation and Development (Housing Preservation) housing recipients, were collectively sentenced in U.S. District Court, **Manhattan, NY**, to 3 years supervised probation and 12 months supervised release, fined \$7,500, and ordered to pay HUD or Housing Preservation \$122,064 in restitution for their earlier guilty pleas to making false statements to HUD or committing theft of government funds. From October 2004 to May 2009, Stroud and Angel failed to report income on housing certifications and together obtained \$122,064 in housing assistance they were not entitled to receive.

Taiki Turner, Angela Carpenter, Rosland Stewart, and Louise Williams, current or former Las Vegas Housing Authority Section 8 tenants and a landlord, were each charged in Las Vegas or Clark County Justice Courts, **Las Vegas, NV**, with allegedly committing theft or theft by misrepresentation and a conspiracy. From November 2003 to July 2009, Turner and Carpenter allegedly failed to report income or an accurate household composition, and Stewart and Williams allegedly conspired and failed to report an unauthorized resident. Collectively, the above defendants obtained \$113,392 in housing assistance they were not entitled to receive.

Six New York City Housing Authority (New York City) housing recipients or applicants were each charged in U.S. District, New York Supreme, or the Bronx Criminal Courts, **Manhattan or the Bronx, NY**, with allegedly making false statements; committing theft of government funds, grand larceny, or forgery; possession of a forged instrument; offering a false instrument for filing; or filing false business records. In addition, New York City housing recipients Sandra Jimenez and Luzveminga Leon and unauthorized housing recipient Willmer Santiago were collectively sentenced to 3 years probation and 72 months supervised release and ordered to perform 100 hours of community service and pay HUD or New York City \$55,971 in restitution for their earlier guilty pleas to committing theft of government funds. Jimenez, Leon, and Santiago admittedly and the remaining defendants allegedly failed to report income, assets, unauthorized residents, or their nonresidency and the subleasing of their subsidized units on housing certifications. Collectively, the above defendants obtained more than \$112,456 in housing assistance they were not entitled to receive.

Aesha Johnson, a Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority (Cuyahoga Metropolitan) Section 8 landlord and tenant, was charged in Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas, **Cleveland, OH**, with allegedly committing theft and tampering with records. In addition, former Cuyahoga Metropolitan housing recipients or landlords Preston Sales, Rhonda Johnson, and Kevin Landrum were collectively sentenced to 66 months incarceration and 10 years community control and ordered to pay Cuyahoga Metropolitan \$43,691 in restitution for their earlier guilty pleas to attempting to tamper with records; possessing criminal tools and weapons under disability; or committing theft, bribery, or trafficking offenses. From July 2003 to September 2009, Aesha Johnson allegedly and Sales and Rhonda Johnson admittedly failed to report income, assets, or accurate household composition on housing certifications, and Landrum paid bribes to pass inspections or increase his housing assistance payments. Collectively, the above defendants obtained more than \$107,598 in housing and utility assistance they were not entitled to receive.

Sonny Vo and Denise Nguyen, a former Norwood Housing Authority Section 8 landlord and tenant, each pled guilty in U.S. District Court, **Boston, MA**, to committing mail fraud. From August 2001 to September 2008, Vo and Nguyen failed to report their joint residency on housing certifications and together obtained \$104,496 in housing assistance they were not entitled to receive.

Rochonda Brown and Melissa McClelland, current or former Mississippi Regional Housing Authority V (Mississippi Regional) Section 8 tenants, were each charged in U.S. District Court, **Jackson, MS**, with allegedly making false statements or claims and committing theft of government funds or mail fraud. In addition, former Mississippi Regional Section 8 tenants Brenda Tillman, Deborah McNair, and Mary Bell each pled guilty to committing theft of government funds, and former Mississippi Regional Section 8 tenant Eva Reynolds was sentenced to 3 years supervised probation and ordered to pay Mississippi Regional \$26,120 in restitution for her earlier guilty plea to committing theft of government funds. Brown and McClelland allegedly and the remaining defendants admittedly failed to report income on housing certifications and collectively obtained \$101,873 in housing assistance they were not entitled to receive.

Zina Worley, a former Boston Housing Authority (Boston) Section 8 tenant, pled guilty in Boston Municipal Court, **Boston, MA**, to making a false claim and committing larceny over \$250 by false pretense. In addition, former Boston Section 8 tenant Gladys Hill was sentenced to 2 years probation and ordered to pay Boston \$25,000 in restitution for her earlier guilty plea to making a false claim and committing larceny over \$250. From March 1998 to January 2007, Worley and Hill failed to report income on housing certifications and together obtained \$95,381 in housing assistance they were not entitled to receive.

Benjamin and Zisi Ruttner, Village of Kaser Section 8 tenants, were each arrested and charged in New York State Justice Court, **Haverstraw, NY**, with allegedly committing grand larceny and welfare fraud. Benjamin and Zisi Ruttner allegedly failed to report income on housing and other certifications and together obtained \$89,430 in housing and \$67,649 in other assistance they were not entitled to receive.

Sonja Taylor and Coletta Washington, current or former Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency (Sacramento) Section 8 tenants, were each charged in Sacramento County Superior Court, **Sacramento, CA**, with allegedly committing grand theft, welfare fraud, and perjury. In addition, former Sacramento Section 8 tenant Frances Gallegos was sentenced to 90 days incarceration and 3 years probation and ordered to pay an undetermined amount of restitution for his earlier *nolo contendere* plea to committing grand theft. The above defendants allegedly failed to report income, their criminal histories, or an unauthorized resident on housing certifications and collectively obtained \$85,992 in housing assistance they were not entitled to receive.

Sheri Hirsh, a former Douglas County Housing Authority (Douglas County) Housing Choice Voucher program participant, was indicted in U.S. District Court, **Omaha, NE**, for allegedly making false statements; former Douglas County Section 8 tenant Shena Holmes entered into a pretrial diversion, admitted to making false statements, and agreed to pay Douglas County \$12,584 in restitution; and former Douglas County housing recipients Cynthia Ellis, Bernita Anderson, and Deonna Wright-Reese were collectively sentenced to 12 years probation and ordered to pay Douglas County \$31,163 in restitution for their earlier guilty pleas to making false statements to HUD. From 2003 to 2008, Hirsh allegedly and the remaining defendants admittedly failed to report income on housing certifications and collectively obtained \$78,623 in housing assistance they were not entitled to receive.

For the full report of HUD's Office of Inspector General (OIG) Semi-annual Report to Congress, go to: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/oig/sar63.pdf>.