



**U. S. Department of Justice**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Wednesday, August 19, 2020

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**LYNN HAVEN MAYOR AND CITY ATTORNEY INDICTED FOR  
CORRUPTION AND FRAUD CHARGES STEMMING FROM HURRICANE MICHAEL  
CLEAN-UP ACTIVITIES**

**PANAMA CITY, FLORIDA** – Lynn Haven City's Mayor and Attorney are the subjects of a 64-count indictment returned yesterday by a federal grand jury in Panama City, Florida. Lynn Haven Mayor Margo Anderson, 65, of Jacksonville, Florida, and Lynn Haven City Attorney Joseph Adam Albritton, 33, of Lynn Haven, Florida, have been indicted for conspiring to commit wire fraud and honest services fraud, substantive counts of wire fraud, honest services fraud, and theft concerning federal programs. Anderson is also charged with making false statements to FBI agents. Albritton is charged with submitting a false invoice to an insurance company for hurricane debris removal from his residence.

United States Attorney Lawrence Keefe of the Northern District of Florida, Special Agent in Charge Rachel Rojas of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Jacksonville Division, and Bay County Sheriff Tommy Ford made the announcement at a press conference held today.

"This indictment serves as a powerful message to all public officials and any other citizen who serves in a position of trust," said U.S. Attorney Keefe. "Our Public Trust Unit, working alongside our federal, state and local law enforcement partners, are committed to investigating and prosecuting anyone who illegally abuses a position of trust for personal gain. The integrity of those who run our government is essential to our democracy."

Anderson was arrested by FBI agents this morning at her Jacksonville, Florida, residence. Her initial appearance is scheduled for 2:30 p.m. EST today at the United States Courthouse in Jacksonville. Albritton was arrested by deputies of the Bay County Sheriff's Office this morning in Lynn Haven, Florida. His initial appearance is scheduled for 4:00 p.m. EST today at the United States Courthouse in Tallahassee.

"This case is an example of what happens when public servants becomes complicit in corrupt behavior rather than standing up to it," said Rachel L. Rojas, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI Jacksonville Division. "Anyone who puts personal greed above their responsibility to protect the

public should be held accountable, and that is why rooting out corrupt public officials remains the FBI's number one criminal investigative priority."

Following Hurricane Michael, on October 16, 2018, the City of Lynn Haven adopted a local state of emergency for post-disaster relief and planning. The City also approved a resolution waiving the procedures that are normally required under Florida law so that timely action could be taken to ensure the safety, welfare, and health of the citizens of Lynn Haven. The resolution delegated emergency powers to Mayor Anderson or her designee, meaning they could independently enter into contracts and spend public funds. Although the emergency declaration was ended by Lynn Haven two weeks later, the city entered into an emergency agreement with David White, owner of Erosion Control Specialists (ECS) to perform hurricane clean-up services.

The indictment returned yesterday alleges ECS was paid for services that were not authorized under the emergency contract. According to the indictment, unauthorized work valued at over \$48,000 was performed at the private residences of Anderson, her mother, and a neighbor, and an additional \$25,000 worth of unauthorized work was performed at the private residences of Albritton and his girlfriend. The indictment alleges that ECS invoices falsely claimed this work was provided to Lynn Haven public areas. After the unauthorized work was performed, Albritton went on to file a fraudulent claim with St. John's Insurance Company that his residence had been damaged by Hurricane Michael, according to the indictment. Albritton is charged with providing the insurance company with a false invoice from ECS indicating he had paid for tree removal, debris removal, and installation of a tarp to his residence totaling \$9,600.

Anderson and Albritton are also charged with devising a scheme to defraud Lynn Haven and its citizens of their right to honest services of Anderson, as Mayor, and Albritton, as City Attorney. The indictment alleges that both Anderson and Albritton solicited and received bribes or kickbacks from City projects that they approved.

After the initial emergency declaration by Lynn Haven expired, the indictment alleges Albritton conspired with then-City Manager Michael White to award a trash pick-up project to ECS. Although Lynn Haven waste trucks had the ability to perform the same work at no additional cost to the city, ECS was paid \$300 per hour, per crew for this task. The indictment charges Albritton with demanding, and receiving, \$10,000 in cash for each weeks of trash services billed to Lynn Haven by ECS from mid-October 2018 through January 2019. The city of Lynn Haven was ultimately billed \$1.8 million for unnecessary trash pick-up according to the indictment.

The indictment alleges that Anderson halted progress on plans to permit a city-owned site for disposal of vegetative debris, even though using the city-owned site would have saved Lynn Haven millions of dollars in disposal fees. Instead, the indictment alleges Anderson told the City Manager to use a privately owned company (Company B) for vegetative debris disposal. According to the indictment, the city of Lynn Haven paid disposal fees in excess of \$2 million to Company B. Additionally, the indictment charges that between 2015 and the present date, Anderson helped Company B win multiple other multi-million dollar contracts with the city of Lynn Haven. In return, the indictment charges Anderson with accepting things of value from the owner of Company B, including travel in a private airplane, lodging aboard a private yacht, meals and entertainment. According to the indictment, Anderson and her husband also received a \$106,000 motorhome from Company B in February 2018.

During the time periods when the alleged crimes were being committed, neither Anderson nor Albritton filed required quarterly gift reports documenting that they received gifts in excess of \$100 according to the indictment.

This investigation was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Bay County Sheriff's Office. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Stephen M. Kunz.

"I am proud of the efforts of the senior criminal investigators and analysts from the Bay County Sheriff's Office, and at the expertise of the team assembled by U.S. Attorney Larry Keefe and Special Agent in Charge Rachel Rojas," said Tommy Ford, Bay County Sheriff. "Through this partnership we will work to root out corruption and hold those responsible for taking advantage of us during our most vulnerable time. This investigation remains very active and ongoing."

If convicted, both Anderson and Albritton face prison terms of up to 20 years for conspiracy to commit wire fraud and honest services fraud, substantive wire fraud and honest services fraud, and mail fraud, and 10 years for theft concerning programs receiving federal funds. Anderson could be sentenced to an additional 5 year term if convicted for making false statements to federal agents and Albritton faces a maximum of 20 years for submitting a false invoice to an insurance company.

This indictment is a follow-up to the indictment returned in November 2019 of five defendants, including former Lynn Haven City Manager Michael White, former Lynn Haven Community Services Director David Horton, and Erosion Control Specialists owner David White, for conspiring to commit wire fraud, substantive counts of wire fraud and honest services fraud, relating to post-Hurricane Michael clean-up activities in Lynn Haven. All five of the defendants indicted in November have pled guilty to charges from the first indictment, and are awaiting sentencing.

An indictment is merely an allegation by a grand jury that a defendant has committed a violation of federal criminal law and is not evidence of guilt. All defendants are presumed innocent and entitled to a fair trial, during which it will be the government's burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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