The Virgin Islands Consortium

Campbell Development Owner And Three Others Charged With Fraud And Identity Theft On St. Croix

Business / **Published On February 26, 2019 08:22 PM /**

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United States Attorney Gretchen C.F. Shappert for the District of the Virgin Islands announced today that charges have been unsealed against Juli Campbell and three others for fraud related to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA's) Sheltering and Temporary Essential Power (STEP) Program.

The federal government's indictment follows The Consortium's relentless reporting of Campbell Development's treatment of contract workers brought to the territory. Our stories also resulted in *the raiding of Campbell Development's office in Peter's Rest by multiple federal law enforcement arms*. The raid occurred on November 2, 2018, with the agents seemingly packing all documents and other items that could serve as evidence in a case. At the time, an agent told The Consortium that because the case was still unfolding, details relative to the matter could not be divulged. Even so, the men packed boxes of documents and other items and placed them in a truck.

The STEP Program provides federal funds for essential repairs to homes damaged by Hurricanes Irma and Maria. According to the indictment returned by the grand jury in the case, Ms. Campbell operated Campbell Development, LLC, which was a subcontractor performing STEP- funded work in St. Croix, VI. Ms. Campbell and her co-defendants are alleged to have executed a scheme whereby they submitted fraudulent invoices related to a STEP-funded subcontract, even including on such invoices the names of workers who were not actually on the island.

“The Department of Justice is committed to ensuring that federal dollars are used for their intended purposes,” said U.S. Attorney Shappert. “The United States Attorney’s Office for the Virgin Islands is especially committed to making certain that federal funds intended for the victims of natural disasters are accounted for and used consistent with FEMA’s directives.”

“The DHS OIG takes any and all allegations of fraudulent activity seriously and intends to hold accountable those who try to use natural disasters such as Hurricane Maria to take advantage of others,” said Special Agent in Charge Jay H. Donly of the DHS OIG Miami Field Office. “The DHS OIG will continue to use its investigative resources to stop those who use these circumstances for personal and illegal gain.”

This case is being investigated by the Department of Homeland Security – Office of the Inspector General as well as Homeland Security Investigations, with support from Customs and Border Protection, Air and Marine Operations. It is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Nathan Brooks.

An indictment is merely a formal charging document, and it is not evidence of guilt. Every defendant is presumed innocent until and unless found guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

Members of the public who suspect fraud involving disaster relief efforts, or believe they have been the victim of fraud from a person or organization soliciting relief funds on behalf of disaster victims, should contact the National Disaster Fraud Hotline toll free at (866) 720-5721. The telephone line is staffed by live operators 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You can also fax information to the Center at (225) 334-4707, or email it to disaster@leo.gov. Learn more about the National Center for Disaster Fraud at www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud and watch a public service announcement here. Tips for the public on how to avoid being victimized of fraud are at https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/tips-avoiding-fraudulent-charitable-contribution- schemes.