

PRESS RELEASE

Leessa Augustine, Former Sewerage & Water Board Special Agent and New Orleans Police Officer, Indicted for Multiple Fraud Schemes

Monday, September 23, 2024

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of Louisiana
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NEW ORLEANS - United States Attorney Duane A. Evans announced that **LEESSA AUGUSTINE ("AUGUSTINE")**, age 46, was indicted on September 20, 2024 for her involvement in multiple fraud schemes while employed as a Sewerage & Water Board of New Orleans ("S&WB") Senior Special Agent, a position tasked with investigating the alleged misconduct of other Sewerage & Water Board employees.

In one alleged scheme, **AUGUSTINE**, who was also a New Orleans Police Department reserve officer, billed a police detail customer for hours not actually worked. It is alleged that during some of the times **AUGUSTINE** was supposed to be working the police detail for the Downtown Development District, she used her S&WB-issued computer to conduct a second fraud scheme, that involved obtaining a mortgage loan and federally funded assistance for low-income homebuyers. In that home-purchase scheme, **AUGUSTINE** allegedly created fake documents, including a fake W-2 form, fake pay stubs, and fake bank statements. In a third alleged scheme, **AUGUSTINE** obtained federally funded unemployment benefits by concealing her Senior Special Agent income. Finally, in a fourth alleged scheme, **AUGUSTINE** obtained federally funded emergency rental assistance from the City of New Orleans, by submitting a fake lease and a termination letter from a fictitious employer. At various times during the schemes, **AUGUSTINE** allegedly provided her S&WB-issued cellphone number as a contact number for three different persons she impersonated.

AUGUSTINE is charged with four counts of Wire Fraud (one count per each fraud scheme). **AUGUSTINE** is also charged with two counts of Aggravated Identity Theft for

allegedly misusing two persons' identities. Finally, **AUGUSTINE** is charged with making False Statements for allegedly lying to investigators.

The wire fraud charge related to the police detail is punishable by up to 20 years' imprisonment. The other three wire fraud charges are each punishable by up to 30 years' imprisonment due to enhanced penalties for fraud related to emergency benefits and fraud affecting a financial institution. Each aggravated identity theft charge is punishable by two years' imprisonment. The false statement charge is punishable by up to five years' imprisonment. Each count may include a fine of up to \$250,000, a term of supervised release following imprisonment, and the payment of a mandatory \$100 special assessment fee.

U.S. Attorney Evans reiterated that the indictment is merely a charge and that the defendant's guilt must be proven beyond a reasonable doubt.

U.S. Attorney Evans thanked the New Orleans Office of Inspector General and the New Orleans Police Department for their valuable assistance in this case.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Office of Inspector General - U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Office of Inspector General - U.S. Department of Labor, and the Office of Inspector General - U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Assistant U.S. Attorney Chandra Menon of the Public Integrity Unit is in charge of the prosecution.

Contact

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United States Attorney's Office, Eastern District of Louisiana

United States Department of Justice

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Topic

FINANCIAL FRAUD

Components

[Federal Bureau of Investigation \(FBI\)](#)

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