

PRESS RELEASE

Raceland Woman Indicted in \$1.5 Million Dollar Fraud Scheme

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For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of Louisiana

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NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA – Acting United States Attorney Michael M. Simpson announced today that **CHERIKAH ROBERSON**, (“**ROBERSON**”), age 40, of Raceland, LA, was indicted on August 14, 2025, for Conspiracy to Commit Wire Fraud (Count 1), in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1343; Making False Statements (Count 2), in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1001(a)(2); Wire Fraud (Counts 3-6), in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1343; and Theft of Government Funds, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 641 (Count 7).

A joint investigation by agents with the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General (“DOL-OIG”), and the Department of Veteran Affairs, Office of Inspector General (“VA-OIG”), revealed that beginning in February 2021, **ROBERSON** defrauded the Small Business Administration (“SBA”) of approximately \$1,446,593.00 through the submission of approximately 60 fraudulent PPP loan applications. It was part of the scheme that **ROBERSON** recruited associates, friends, and family members, primarily via Facebook, to prepare and file fraudulent PPP applications. **ROBERSON** prepared and submitted false and fraudulent PPP sole proprietor loan applications via various online portals including, but not limited to, Blueacorn and Liberty SBF. **ROBERSON** created false and fraudulent invoices, bank statements, and federal tax forms (“Schedule C”) in order to prepare the fraudulent PPP loan applications. **ROBERSON** falsely certified that the application and the information provided in the supporting documents were true and accurate when she electronically submitted the fraudulent PPP loan applications.

According to the indictment, **ROBERSON** also filed for her own fraudulent PPP application. On April 19, 2021, **ROBERSON** submitted a fictitious South Louisiana Bank Statement from February of 2020 as part of her PPP loan application. Additionally, **ROBERSON** claimed on her PPP application that she had income of \$247,546.00 for the year 2019 and submitted a fraudulent Schedule C in support of her application for a PPP loan. **ROBERSON** knew that the representations in her PPP

application were false, and the Schedule C was fraudulent because she did not have income of \$247,546.00 for the year 2019, leading to her receipt of an SBA-backed PPP loan of approximately \$20,833.00.

Additionally, **ROBERSON** is charged with defrauding, and attempting to defraud, various state offices of unemployment insurance (UI) through the submission of fraudulent UI applications. According to the indictment, **ROBERSON** recruited friends and family members via Facebook using the name "Rikah Marie" to file fraudulent UI applications. **ROBERSON** filed fraudulent UI applications for herself and others in various states, including Kentucky and Louisiana. **ROBERSON** charged individuals, for whom she filed fraudulent UI claims, approximately \$1,200.00 to \$1,500.00.

For example, beginning in July 2020, **ROBERSON**, defrauded the Commonwealth of Kentucky's Office of Unemployment Insurance out of approximately \$5,888.00 in UI benefits through the submission of a fraudulent UI applications

Lastly, the indictment alleges that **ROBERSON** fraudulently completed a FEMA Application for Disaster Assistance in September 2021. **ROBERSON** claimed that her mobile home, located in Bourg, LA, was damaged following Hurricane Ida's landfall on August 29, 2021. An investigation by FEMA revealed that the trailer **ROBERSON** claimed as her primary residence, was demolished in April 2021. As a result of the fraudulent claims, FEMA deposited \$47,492.77 in disaster assistance into **ROBERSON's** bank account.

In total, the indictment alleges **ROBERSON** fraudulently attempted to obtain approximately \$1,446,593.00 as a result of the submission of the fraudulent PPP applications and loans, as well as, \$5,888.00 in fraudulent UI payments from the Commonwealth of Kentucky; and \$47,492.77 in fraudulent payments from FEMA for Hurricane Ida.

Acting U.S. Attorney Simpson reiterated that the indictment is merely a charge and that the guilt of the defendant must be proven beyond a reasonable doubt.

On May 17, 2021, the Attorney General established the COVID-19 Fraud Enforcement Task Force to marshal the resources of the Department of Justice in partnership with agencies across government to enhance efforts to combat and prevent pandemic-related fraud. The Task Force bolsters efforts to investigate and prosecute the most culpable domestic and international criminal actors and assists agencies tasked with administering relief programs to prevent fraud by, among other methods, augmenting and incorporating existing coordination mechanisms, identifying resources and techniques to uncover fraudulent actors and their schemes, and sharing and harnessing information and insights

gained from prior enforcement efforts. For more information on the Department's response to the pandemic, please visit <https://www.justice.gov/coronavirus>. The Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of the Inspector General, is an active member of the PRAC Fraud Task Force.

"The PRAC was established to promote transparency and facilitate coordinated oversight of the federal government's COVID-19 pandemic response. The PRAC's 20 member Inspectors General identify major risks that cross program and agency boundaries to detect fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement in the more than \$5 trillion in COVID-19 spending, including spending via the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), and Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) program. This case was also supported by the PRAC's Pandemic Analytics Center of Excellence, which applies the latest advances in analytic and forensic technologies to help OIGs and law enforcement pursue data-driven pandemic relief fraud investigations."

Anyone with information about allegations of attempted fraud involving COVID-19 can report it by calling the Department of Justice's National Center for Disaster Fraud (NCDF) Hotline at 866-720-5721 or via the NCDF Web Complaint Form at <https://www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form>.

The United States Attorney's Office would also like to acknowledge the assistance of the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General; the Department of Veteran Affairs, Office of Inspector General; The Pandemic Response Accountability Committee; and the United States Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General COVID Fraud Unit. The prosecution of this case is being handled by Assistant United States Attorney Brian M. Klebba, Chief of the Financial Crimes Unit.

Contact

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Eastern District of Louisiana

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