



Robert Lee Spires Charged with Alleged Disaster Fraud Related to Tuscaloosa Tornado

McNabb Associates, P.C. (Federal Criminal Defense Lawyers)

Submitted at 7:24 AM October 22, 2011

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) on October 21, 2011 released the following:

“BIRMINGHAM— The September indictment of a west Alabama man for fraudulently claiming disaster benefits following the April 27 tornadoes in Alabama was unsealed this week following his arrest in Fayette County, announced U.S. Attorney Joyce White Vance and FBI Special Agent in Charge Patrick J. Maley.

A federal grand jury indicted ROBERT LEE SPIRES, 47, for wire fraud in connection with a scheme to defraud the Federal Emergency Management Agency of disaster-related benefits. U.S. Magistrate Judge T. Michael Putnam ordered Spires detained on the charges today.

According to the indictment, Spires received \$1,114 for rental assistance and \$471 for personal property assistance from FEMA after falsely claiming on June 21 that he was renting a house on Short 25th Avenue East in Tuscaloosa when it was severely damaged by a tornado. He was not eligible for the assistance because he did not live at that address and did not own any personal property there, the indictment states.

Spires made further attempts to defraud FEMA, seeking disaster benefits for non-existent vision-related expenses and for a car and home appliances he did not own, according to the indictment.

“The U.S. Attorney’s Office, the FBI and

many other federal law enforcement agencies are watching closely for anyone wrongfully seeking or obtaining disaster benefits,” Vance said. “So many people in North Alabama were seriously harmed by the April 27 tornadoes and disaster benefits are intended to help those survivors recover from the devastating storms. Anyone who commits a crime in order to steal benefits from storm survivors should expect to be prosecuted,” she said.

According to the indictment, the car Spires attempted to obtain benefits on belonged to an associate of his and was not damaged in the storm. The indictment also charges that Spires faxed documents from the Fayette County Memorial Library to a FEMA facility in West Virginia in an attempt to claim benefits for vision expenses and the cost of home appliances. He faxed correspondence to FEMA on July 21 seeking reimbursement for about \$276 in vision-related expenses and, on July 27, he faxed correspondence seeking disaster benefits for \$2,354 worth of home appliances he claimed were associated with tornado damage at the Short 25th Avenue East residence in Tuscaloosa, the indictment states.

The fraud charge carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

The public can report fraud, waste, abuse, or allegations of mismanagement involving disaster relief operations through the National Disaster Fraud Hotline, toll free, at 1-866-720-5721, or by e-mailing disaster@leo.gov. The telephone line is staffed by a live operator

24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The FBI investigated the case. The Fayette County Sheriff’s Office, with assistance from the City of Fayette Police Department, arrested Spires. The Tuscaloosa Police Department also participated in the search for Spires. The U.S. Attorney’s Office is prosecuting the case.

Members of the public are reminded that an indictment contains only charges. A defendant is presumed innocent of the charges and it will be the government’s burden to prove a defendant’s guilt beyond a reasonable doubt at trial.”

Douglas McNabb – McNabb Associates, P.C.’s

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Douglas McNabb and other members of the U.S. law firm practice and write and/or report extensively on matters involving Federal Criminal Defense, INTERPOL Red Notice Removal, International Extradition and OFAC SDN Sanctions Removal.

The author of this blog is Douglas McNabb. Please feel free to contact him directly at mcnabb@mcnabbassociates.com or at one of the offices listed above.

U.S. Marshals Investigate and Arrest Three Suspected of Impersonating Federal Officers

McNabb Associates, P.C. (Federal Criminal Defense Lawyers)

Submitted at 5:12 AM October 22, 2011

U.S. Marshals Service on October 21, 2011 released the following:

“Youngstown, OH – Peter J. Elliott, United States Marshal for the Northern District of Ohio, is announcing the arrests of three individuals who are suspected of impersonating federal law enforcement officers. On July 27, 2011 witnesses

observed several subjects in downtown Youngstown wearing clothing and badges that identified them as “Special Police Constables” for the United States Government. The U.S. Marshals Service was contacted and an investigation was initiated.

As a result of the investigation the United States Attorney’s Office for the Northern District of Ohio secured indictments for Leroy Dock, Milton Willis, and Quin

Willis charging them with Impersonation of a Federal Law Enforcement Officer.

The indictment alleges that beginning around June 2009 these subjects portrayed themselves as federal law enforcement officers and possessed badges, identifications, and other law enforcement type clothing and equipment. All three subjects have previously been investigated



Ex-Blackwater guards appeal to Supreme Court

McNabb Associates, P.C. (Federal Criminal Defense Lawyers)

Submitted at 4:36 AM October 22, 2011

Politico on October 21, 2011 released the following:

Posted by Josh Gerstein

“Four American workers for the Blackwater security firm who were accused of massacring civilians in Iraq in 2007 are asking the U.S. Supreme Court to reinstate a ruling that threw out a criminal case charging the security contractors with manslaughter and weapons violations.

U.S. District Court Judge Ricardo Urbina dismissed the case in 2009 on the grounds that the evidence was improperly tainted by statements the men made under threat of losing their jobs. However, in April of this year, a federal appeals court granted the U.S. government’s request to overturn that decision and reinstated the unusual prosecution for crimes allegedly committed outside U.S. territory.

The four guards formerly employed by Blackwater (now Xe) to protect State Department personnel were charged in 2008 with involvement in a shooting incident in Baghdad’s Al Nisur Square in U.S.

continued from page 1

by the Boardman and Youngstown Police Departments for offenses relating to the impersonation of police officers.

On October 20, 2011, at approximately 6:30 p.m., the U.S. Marshals Northern Ohio Violent Fugitive Task Force arrested the three subjects at various locations in Youngstown and Boardman. The U.S. Marshals Service was assisted by the Boardman Police Department, the Youngstown Police Department, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Defense Criminal Investigation Service.

U.S. Marshal Pete Elliott stated, “These are serious allegations and the community should be comforted to know that we will pursue anyone that violates the trust of the public by falsely portraying themselves as law enforcement officers.”

Anyone with information regarding the whereabouts of a known fugitive is encouraged to contact the U.S. Marshals Northern Ohio Violent Fugitive Task Force at: 1-866-4-WANTED. Callers may remain anonymous and reward money is available.

The Northern Ohio Violent Fugitive Task

2007 that left at least 14 Iraqis dead.

Prosecutors said in court filings that the guards fired live ammunition willy-nilly into crowds and some defendants had a pattern of abusive words or actions towards Iraqis. The defense argued in court filings that any shooting took place in response to perceived threats and may not even have come from their clients.

The petition to restore Urbina’s original ruling was filed with the Supreme Court on Monday, but has not been formally docketed while the Court considers whether portions of the petition can be kept under seal. The former Blackwater workers appealing to the high court are Paul Slough, Evan Liberty, Dustin Heard and Donald Ball. The case against a fifth contractor in the convoy, Nicholas Slatten, was dropped by prosecutors.

A sixth man on the Blackwater crew during the altercation, Jeremy Ridgeway, agreed to cooperate with prosecutors. He pled guilty in 2008 to manslaughter and attempted manslaughter charges

President Barack Obama announced Friday that nearly all U.S. military personnel will leave Iraq by the end of 2011. However, approximately 4,000 to

Force in the greater Warren/Youngstown area is composed of the following federal, state and local agencies: Boardman Township Police Department, Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Columbiana County Sheriff’s Office, Dalton Police Department, East Liverpool Police Department, Girard Police Department, Goshen Township Police Department, Hubbard Township Police Department, Liberty Township Police Department, Lisbon Police Department, Lordstown Police Department, McDonald Police Department, New Waterford Police Department, Newton Falls Police Department, Niles Police Department, Ohio Adult Parole Authority, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Identification, Ohio State Highway Patrol, Salem Police Department, Trumbull County Probation Office, Trumbull County Sheriff’s Office, U.S. Marshals Service, Warren Municipal Courts, Warren Police Department, Washingtonville Police Department, Weathersfield Township Police Department, and the Youngstown Police Department.”

5,000 civilian security personnel under contract to the U.S. government are expected to remain in Iraq, a White House official said.”

Douglas McNabb – McNabb Associates, P.C.’s

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