



KATHERINE FERNANDEZ RUNDLE

STATE ATTORNEY



ELEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Businessman Pastor Charged in Scheme to Defraud Elderly Man

Allegedly Takes Victim's Future Dream Home & Leaves Man Only with Debts

Miami – February 15, 2022 - Miami-Dade State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle and Florida Department of Law Enforcement Special Agent-in-Charge Troy Walker announce the arrest of 62-year-old Eric Readon, a businessman and a City of Miami Gardens Pastor. Readon is being charged with:

- 1 count of Exploitation of an Elderly or Disabled Person - 1st Degree Felony
- 1 count of Organized Scheme to Defraud - 1st Degree Felony
- 1 count of Conspiracy to Commit Organized Scheme to Defraud - 2nd Degree Felony
- 1 count of Theft from a Person 65 Years or Older - 1st Degree Felony
- 1 count of Grand Theft - 3rd Degree Felony

The victim in this case, 76-year-old Edward Fuller, is a vulnerable, elderly man, who owned a property located at 10911 NW 19th Avenue, in Miami, where he was attempting to complete construction of his self-financed, retirement dream home. Although the exterior of the home had been completed, Fuller had run into difficulty obtaining financing to finish the interior work necessary to make the home fully livable. With the construction incomplete, Fuller could not obtain a mortgage or a line of credit to finish the interior work.

“There is something particularly galling when an alleged fraudster snatches away the very hopes and dreams of one of our senior residents,” said State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle. “Elderly exploitation so often is a complex shell-game depending on great trust being quietly transformed into financial deception via a movement of signed contracts, deeds and paperwork. I thank the Florida Department of Law Enforcement for their work in helping us bring this case before our criminal courts.”

In the third week of July 2015, Fuller was at the NW 19th Avenue house when the previously unknown Readon drove up and introduced himself to Fuller as a Pastor. Readon was and is a Pastor at the New Beginnings Missionary Baptist Church in the City of Miami Gardens. Working as a church pastor provided Readon with great credibility in Fuller's eyes. Readon told Fuller that a woman in the Miami-Dade Permit Office shared with him that Fuller may be in need of financing to finish the house. Readon told Fuller that for \$15,000, he would help Fuller get a loan to complete the construction. Once the house was completed, Fuller would then obtain a mortgage to pay off both the loan and Readon's \$15,000 fee.

Days later, Readon directed Fuller to meet him at an office where Readon presented Fuller with a Quit Claim Deed transferring fifty percent ownership of the NW 19th Avenue property to Project Youth Outreach Unlimited (Y.O.U.), a Florida Not-for-Profit Corporation owned by Readon. Readon explained that the lender would only

FOR FURTHER

INFORMATION CONTACT:

Terry Chavez, Public Information Officer
(305) 547-0535

TerryGonzalez-Chavez@MiamiSAO.com

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provide the loan if Readon owned fifty percent of the property. Readon told Fuller that the transfer of partial ownership was only so that they could obtain the loan. After the house was completed, Readon would sign back full ownership of the property to Fuller.

Fuller signed over a half ownership of the property to get the financing to complete his home, believing in the representations of someone Fuller saw as a man of God. This began a complex scheme by Readon involving numerous back-and-forth property deed transfers, construction loans, modifications, mortgages, and credit card advances, all intended to confuse and deceive Fuller. Meanwhile, Readon used the property to enrich himself. In just over eighteen months, Readon, through deception, took full ownership of the property and without Fuller's knowledge sold the property without any of the profits ever going to Fuller.

Readon induced Fuller to enter into a business relationship and then financially exploited him. All Fuller obtained from his interactions with Readon was debt. Readon systematically, and in conspiracy with others, defrauded Edward Fuller of his property and his home. Readon left Fuller with thousands of dollars of credit card debt. Readon's total theft from Mr. Fuller was approximately \$267,000.

Readon also used the same NW 19th Avenue property to defraud newlyweds Safiyah and Calvin Singleton. He fraudulently promised them a rent-to-buy agreement on their dream first home and thereby induced them to give him \$3,100. Readon stole Safiyah and Calvin's money and left them without a home to sleep in just before their first Christmas together as a married couple.

"It is truly disgraceful when someone tries to scam our most vulnerable citizens, especially when that someone promotes himself as a person in a position of public trust. I commend the dedication and hard work of our agents and analysts who worked nearly 1200 hours on this case to bring Readon to justice. Elderly exploitation has no place in our communities." Florida Department of Law Enforcement Special Agent-in-Charge Troy Walker.

If you are interested in seeking additional commentary from State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle on this matter, please call 305-547-0535.

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