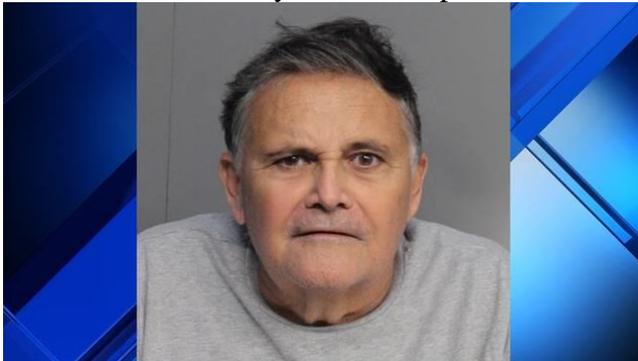


Man sentenced to 20 years in prison for setting homes on fire in insurance fraud scheme

Jorge Fausto Espinosa Sr. recruited homeowners in Miami-Dade, Lee and Collier

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MIAMI - A man was sentenced to 20 years in state prison Friday for setting homes on fire in various counties in an insurance fraud scheme.

Jorge Fausto Espinosa Sr., owner of the public adjuster company, Nationwide Adjusters LLC, pleaded guilty to racketeering, racketeering conspiracy, organized scheme to defraud, over 28 counts of arson, as well as multiple counts of insurance fraud and grand theft.

Judge Mark Blumstein ordered that Espinosa also pay \$1.9 million in restitution.

Prosecutors said in a news release that Espinosa was one of many defendants charged in a series of investigations called Operation Flames and Flood I and Operation Flames and Flood II.

Prosecutors said Espinosa intentionally set multiple homes on fire and caused water damage to other homes with the sole purpose of filing false and fraudulent insurance claims.

Espinosa recruited homeowners to take part in the scheme in Miami-Dade, Lee and Collier counties, prosecutors said.

"The insurance fraud ring that [Jorge Fausto Espinosa Sr.](#) led gave a sense of professionalism and expertise to the age-old crime of theft," Miami-Dade State Attorney [Katherine Fernandez Rundle](#) said in a statement. "Insurance policy holders were Espinosa's real victims. This is a wonderful

result for the hard-working prosecutors, police and fire investigators who put this complex case together and worked it to the proper ending."

Prosecutors said more than 14 insurance carriers were impacted by more than 50 false claims.

Authorities said the scheme cost insurance companies and insurance policy holders over \$14 million in losses.

"I applaud the work of all the local and statewide law enforcement partners who played a role in the dismantling of this fraud ring and especially the Office of Miami-Dade State Attorney [Katherine Fernandez Rundle](#) for her commitment to ensuring insurance fraud criminals are held accountable for their actions," Florida Chief Financial Officer and State Fire Marshal Jimmy Patronis said in a statement. "Our message is simple: If you commit insurance fraud in Florida, be prepared to face swift action from our law enforcement units."

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