

THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE  
WESTERN DISTRICT *of* WISCONSIN

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Department of Justice  
U.S. Attorney's Office  
Western District of Wisconsin

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, September 15, 2022

## Grand Jury Returns Indictments

MADISON, WIS. - A federal grand jury in the Western District of Wisconsin, sitting in Madison, returned the following indictments yesterday. You are advised that a charge is merely an accusation and that a defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

### Tomah Man Charged with Wire Fraud & False Statements

Jonathan Walker, 44, Tomah, Wisconsin, is charged in a 12-count indictment that alleges he engaged in a scheme to defraud the United States and to obtain money by making false representations. Specifically, Walker is charged with 10 counts of wire fraud and 2 counts of making false statements.

The indictment alleges that Walker was the owner and operator of Walker Investment Properties, LLC (WIP) located in Tomah, a mechanical contracting business that offered electrical services and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) services, and that from July 2015 to June 2019, he sought and obtained federal contracts by alleging that WIP was a Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB). Federal contracting officers may restrict competition for government contracts to SDVOSBs if the owner of a business is a veteran and has a service-connected disability. The indictment alleges that Walker was neither a veteran, meaning he did not serve in the active U.S. military, naval, air, or space service, nor did he suffer a disability incurred in the line of duty while in active US military, naval, air or space service.

The indictment alleges that the Department of Defense awarded two contracts to WIP totaling \$1,927,536.79 for HVAC services and fire alarm installation at Fort McCoy, a U.S. Army installation located in Monroe County, Wisconsin, and that Walker caused WIP to issue invoices for services provided under these contracts that resulted in payments to WIP totaling \$482,577.

If convicted, Walker faces a maximum penalty of 20 years in federal prison on each wire fraud charge and a maximum of 5 years on each false statement charge. The charges against him are the result of an investigation by the Department of Defense, Office of Inspector General; the Defense Criminal Investigative Service; and the General Services Administration, Office of Inspector General. Assistant U.S. Attorney Daniel Graber is handling the prosecution.

**Three Dane County Residents Charged with Making False Statements During Firearm Purchases**

Kassidy Garrett, 21, Tyler Seaton, 20, both of Fitchburg, Wisconsin, and Isaiah Phillips, 18, Madison, Wisconsin, are charged with making false statements during the purchase of firearms. The indictment charges Garrett with 4 counts of making a false statement on a Firearms Transaction Record form required by federal law during the purchase of firearms on four occasions in February, March, and April 2022. The indictment alleges that she indicated on the forms she was the actual buyer of the firearms, but in fact she was not the actual buyer. Making such a false statement during the purchase of a firearm is commonly known as a “straw purchase.”

The indictment also charges Seaton with 4 counts of making false statements by allegedly inducing and causing Garrett to falsely state that she was the actual buyer of the firearms, whereas both Seaton and Garrett knew she was not the actual buyer. Phillips is charged with 2 counts of making false statements by allegedly inducing and causing Garrett to falsely state that she was the actual buyer of the firearms during two of the purchases, whereas both Phillips and Garrett knew she was not the actual buyer.

If convicted, Garrett, Seaton, and Phillips face a maximum penalty of 5 years in federal prison on each count. The charges against them are the result of an investigation by the Fitchburg Police Department, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and the Monroe Police Department. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Corey Stephan and Kathryn Ginsberg are handling the prosecution.

### **La Crosse Man Charged with Drug & Gun Crimes**

Jade Deeny, 26, La Crosse, Wisconsin, is charged with distributing cocaine, possessing cocaine with the intent to distribute, possessing 50 grams or more of methamphetamine with the intent to distribute, and using and maintaining a place for the distribution of cocaine. The indictment also charges him with possessing loaded firearms in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime and with being a felon in possession of a firearm. The indictment alleges that these offenses occurred in June 2022.

If convicted, Deeny faces a maximum penalty of 20 years of the charges of distributing cocaine and possessing cocaine for distribution, a mandatory minimum of 5 years and a maximum of 40 years on the charge of possessing 50 grams or more of methamphetamine for distribution, and a maximum of 20 years on the charge of maintaining a drug house. The charge of possessing loaded firearms in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime carries a mandatory minimum penalty of 5 years and a maximum of life. Any sentence imposed on this charge must be served consecutively to any other prison sentence imposed. The maximum penalty on the charge of being a felon in possession of a firearm is 10 years.

The charges against Deeny are the result of an investigation by the La Crosse Police Department and Federal Bureau of Investigation. Assistant U.S. Attorney Chadwick Elgersma is handling the prosecution.

The charges against Garrett, Seaton, Phillips, and Deeny are brought as part of Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN), a program bringing together all levels of law enforcement and the communities they serve to reduce violent crime and gun violence, and to make our neighborhoods safer for everyone. On May 26, 2021, the U.S. Justice Department launched a violent crime reduction strategy strengthening PSN based on these core principles: fostering trust and legitimacy in our communities, supporting community-based organizations that help prevent violence from occurring in the first place, setting focused and strategic enforcement priorities, and measuring the results.

### **North Carolina Man Charged with Receiving Child Pornography**

Christopher Bell, 37, Lumberton, North Carolina, formerly of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, is charged with receiving child pornography. The indictment alleges that on April 18, 2022, Bell received an image sent via Snapchat of a minor engaging in sexually explicit conduct.

If convicted, Bell faces a mandatory minimum penalty of 5 years and a maximum of 20 years in federal prison. The charge against him is the result of an investigation by the Wisconsin Rapids Police Department and the Fayetteville,

North Carolina office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Assistant U.S. Attorney Elizabeth Altman is handling the prosecution.

### Washburn County Woman Charged with Tax Crimes

Deborah Brown, 67, Birchwood, Wisconsin, is charged with 13 counts of failing to pay over to the Internal Revenue Service taxes due to the United States on behalf of Omni Designs International, Inc. (Omni), located in Birchwood. The indictment alleges that Brown, as the co-owner and operator of the business, was responsible for bookkeeping and made the financial decisions for the company, including the payment of employment taxes.

The indictment alleges that from July 1, 2016 to September 30, 2019, Brown failed to pay over to the Internal Revenue Service payroll taxes due to the United States on behalf of Omni and its employees for 13 consecutive quarters. The indictment alleges that Brown failed to pay approximately \$239,000 in income, Social Security, and Medicare taxes withheld from wages paid to Omni's employees.

If convicted, Brown faces a maximum penalty of 5 years in federal prison on each count. The charges against her are the result of an investigation by IRS Criminal Investigation. Assistant U.S. Attorney Daniel Graber is handling the prosecution.

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**Topic(s):**

Project Safe Childhood  
Project Safe Neighborhoods  
Tax  
Drug Trafficking  
Financial Fraud

**Component(s):**

USAO - Wisconsin, Western

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