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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

Attorney General James Uthmeier Disrupts Con Man's Hawaiian Vacation with Arrest for Securities Fraud Scheme

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General James Uthmeier announced the arrest of Steven Harry Minard, 57, of Orlando. This investigation was conducted in collaboration with the Florida Office of Financial Regulation (OFR) and Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) New York El Dorado Task Force (EDTF). Minard is alleged to have orchestrated a complex scheme to defraud a high-profile investor of \$1,000,000 by promoting a non-existent multi-billion-dollar development project known as "Orlando World Live" (OWL).

"This case exemplifies the reach of our Statewide Prosecutors, who partner with state, local, and federal law enforcement to bring criminals back to Florida to face justice," **said Attorney General James Uthmeier**. "Thanks to the Florida Office of Financial Regulation, our federal partners at HSI New York EDTF, HSI Orlando, HSI Honolulu, and the Hawaii Department of Law Enforcement for their collaboration on this investigation and arrest."

"Thank you to OFR's investigators, the Department of Homeland Security Investigations, and Attorney General James Uthmeier's Office of Statewide Prosecution for their hard work in bringing this case forward," **said Florida Office of Financial Regulation Commissioner Russell C. Weigel, III**. "Together with our partners, we will continue to combat investment fraud and protect Floridians from scammers and bad actors."

"Today's arrest marks a significant step in dismantling a sophisticated securities fraud scheme that deceived investors into believing in a fictitious real estate project, resulting in substantial financial losses for public figures and everyday citizens alike," **said HSI New York Acting Special Agent in Charge Michael Alfonso**. "The impact of this scheme reverberated far beyond its victims, eroding public trust and undermining confidence in legitimate investment opportunities. HSI New York remains steadfast in pursuing those who exploit others for personal gain, and we thank HSI Orlando, HSI Honolulu, the Florida Attorney General's Office, and the Florida Office of Financial Regulation for their invaluable collaboration in bringing this case to justice."

Collectively, HSI New York EDTF, HSI Orlando, HSI Hawaii, and the Hawaii Department of Law Enforcement/Sheriff Division successfully located and arrested Minard in Honolulu, Hawaii, while attempting to board a flight back to Houston, Texas. Minard is currently in custody with the state of Hawaii's extradition detail, pending extradition to Florida.

According to the investigative findings, Minard presented OWL as a massive entertainment and urban development project in downtown Orlando, featuring futuristic "zones," high-profile celebrity partnerships, and projected revenues exceeding \$1.6 billion. However, a forensic financial analysis and interviews with over a dozen witnesses revealed that no such project existed. No permit applications or contracts were ever filed with the City of Orlando, and the funds provided by the victim were allegedly diverted to pay off Minard's unrelated business debts and personal expenses.

The investigative findings establish that Minard knowingly and intentionally engaged in a scheme to defraud by making materially false statements and misappropriating investment funds. The purported OWL project lacked any verifiable operational plans or execution evidence and falsely assured investors of safety and exclusivity while actively avoiding independent verification.

Minard faces felony charges, including one count of Scheme to Defraud (over \$50,000) and one count of Sale of an Unregistered Security.

This case will be prosecuted by Special Counsel Robert Finkbeiner in Florida's Ninth Judicial Circuit.

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