Oct 28, 2021

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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

AG Moody Announces Arrests in $1 Million Statewide Pool Contractor Fraud Scheme

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody and Chief Financial Officer Jimmy Patronis today announced the arrest of Ricardo Villarroel Duerto, owner of Villa Pavers and Pools, for allegedly defrauding nearly 100 homeowners throughout the state in excess of $1 million. Authorities also arrested Luis Alvarez Daboin of Conquer Pools, along with Villa Pavers and Pools salespersons Michael Borrego Fernandez and Laura Ballester Alpizar, for involvement in the scheme. Attorney General Moody's Office of Statewide Prosecution will prosecute the defendants.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "These defendants intentionally ripped off Florida families trying to obtain pools and better their homes—causing more than a million dollars in fraud. I am grateful for CFO Patronis and DFS investigators for taking action and stopping this scheme affecting Floridians across the state. My Statewide Prosecutors will make it known to all parties involved that we will not permit shady contractors stealing Floridians' hard-earned money."

Chief Financial Officer Jimmy Patronis said, "When Florida families use a pool contractor, they should not have to worry that the person they hire is going to take the money and run. As CFO, I'm committed to putting an end to contractor fraud and I am grateful that this scheme was uncovered, and these alleged fraudsters are off the street before they could take advantage of anyone else. Thank you to Attorney General Ashley Moody for her commitment to ensure these contractors are held accountable for their crimes."

The Florida Department of Financial Services' Division of Investigative & Forensics Services initiated an investigation into Villa Pavers and Pools after receiving a complaint that the company collected 80% of the contracted price for the installation of a pool and never completed the job. The investigation revealed that the alleged business model for Villa Pavers and Pools aimed to collect 40% of the initial contracted price to install a pool, with no intent of doing the job, and/or leaving an unusable backyard with a giant hole.

The investigation also uncovered that licensed general contractor Luis Alvarez Daboin of Conquer Pools aided and abetted unlicensed Ricardo Villarroel Duerto and Concetta Villarroel Arismendi, owners of Villa Pavers and Pools, to defraud homeowners throughout the state. Luis Alvarez Daboin sold the use of his general contractor license to unlicensed Villa Pavers and Pools, so the company could present a contractor license to homeowners and obtain building permits.

Ricardo Villarroel Duerto, Michael Borrego Fernandez, Laura Ballester Alpizar and Luis Alvarez Daboin are charged with racketeering, scheme to defraud and grand theft. If convicted, the

defendants could face up to 30 years in prison. Additional arrests are expected. Assistant Statewide Prosecutor Rebecca Smith-Hameroff will handle the prosecutions.