

## **Update: Ring Leader of Staged Accident Probe Exposed by Galloway Pleads Guilty to Federal Fraud Charges**

Damien Labeaud, one of the ring leaders of a staged accident ring acting out of New Orleans East, plead guilty to federal charges on August 6. This comes after James Prather and Bowman Fetzer of Galloway successfully defended a civil lawsuit in October of last year in which Labeaud was suspected of colluding with Lucinda Thomas, Mary Wade, Judy Williams, and Dashontae Young to stage an 18-wheeler accident, then bringing suit against the trucking company seeking more than 1.5 million dollars in damages. All four women pleaded guilty.

Galloway defense attorneys obtained key police video, cell phone records and expert analysis to prove the accident was staged. Using this evidence, the team established that the claimants had lied under oath and had conspired with Labeaud, and possibly plaintiffs' counsel, to set up a fake collision and then seek to cash in running up over \$700,000 in medical expenses and undergoing multiple surgeries for injuries that never happened. In large part upon the evidence developed in the civil case, the United States District Court in New Orleans brought indictments against the plaintiffs, as well as the individuals suspected in staging the accident with the plaintiffs. These indictments were issued on October 24, 2019.

According to [court documents](#) from the guilty plea that occurred on August 6, Labeaud conspired to commit wire fraud by colluding with several local attorneys to stage upwards of 40 accidents involving 18-wheeler tractor-trailers. He will face a maximum sentence of five years. Labeaud also faces a term of supervised release upon release from prison for up to three years, and/or a fine of \$250,000 or the greater of twice the gross gain to each defendant or twice the gross loss to any person under Title 18, United States Code, Section 371. Sentencing in this matter is scheduled for November 19, before U.S. District Judge Eldon Fallon.

WWL-TV utilized the evidence to expose the scam to the public in a recent broadcast which featured video evidence showing Labeaud arriving at the scene of the accident that occurred on June 6, 2017. To view the footage and read more about WWLTV's investigation, click [here](#).



Galloway Johnson Tompkins Burr & Smith

**James A. Prather, *Director***

Licensed in Louisiana

[jprather@gallowaylawfirm.com](mailto:jprather@gallowaylawfirm.com)

**Campbell Bowman Fetzer, *Director***

Licensed in Louisiana

[bfetzer@gallowaylawfirm.com](mailto:bfetzer@gallowaylawfirm.com)