

PRESS RELEASE

Former Sewerage & Water Board Special Agent Sentenced for Multiple Fraud Schemes

Monday, December 22, 2025

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of Louisiana
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NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA – Acting United States Attorney Michael M. Simpson announced that **LEESSA AUGUSTINE (“AUGUSTINE”)** age 47, a resident of New Orleans, was sentenced on December 16, 2025, for charges related to her involvement in fraud schemes while employed as a Sewerage & Water Board of New Orleans (“S&WB”) Senior Special Agent, a position that tasked her with investigating the alleged misconduct of other Sewerage & Water Board employees.

United States District Judge Greg Gerard Guidry sentenced **AUGUSTINE** to 6 months’ home detention to be followed by five years’ supervised release and \$94,972 in restitution.

AUGUSTINE sentence was imposed on her guilty pleas to three counts of Wire Fraud and one count of making False Statements for lying to investigators. In one scheme, **AUGUSTINE**, who was also a New Orleans Police Department reserve officer, billed a police detail customer for hours not actually worked. During some of the times **AUGUSTINE** was supposed to be working the police detail for the Downtown Development District, she used her S&WB-issued computer to conduct a second fraud scheme, that involved obtaining a mortgage loan and federally funded assistance for low-income homebuyers. In that home-purchase scheme, **AUGUSTINE** created fake documents, including a fake W-2 form, fake pay stubs, and fake bank statements. In a third scheme, **AUGUSTINE** obtained federally funded unemployment benefits by concealing her Senior Special Agent income. Finally, in a fourth scheme, **AUGUSTINE** obtained federally funded emergency rental assistance from the City of New Orleans, by submitting a fake lease and a termination letter from a fictitious employer. At various times during the schemes, **AUGUSTINE** provided her S&WB-issued cellphone number as a contact number for persons she impersonated.

Acting U.S. Attorney Simpson thanked the New Orleans Office of Inspector General and the New Orleans Police Department for their valuable assistance in this case.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Office of Inspector General - U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Office of Inspector General - U.S. Department of Labor, and the Office of Inspector General – U.S. Department of Homeland Security. It was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Chandra Menon of the Public Integrity Unit.

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Updated December 22, 2025

Topic

FINANCIAL FRAUD