

Worst Insurance Fraud Scams of 2014

By: Coalition Against Insurance Fraud

A driver rockets his \$1-million Bugatti into a salty lagoon ... Two kids perish in a home insurance arson their own mother set ... A cancer doctor pumps healthy patients with toxic chemotherapy in a \$125-million insurance plot.

These masters of disaster are among the eight worst insurance criminals of 2014. The extreme schemers were chosen by the [Coalition Against Insurance Fraud](#).

The No-Class of 2014 displays the year's most brazen, bungling or vicious convicted insurance swindlers.

One of America's largest financial crimes, insurance fraud steals at least \$80 billion annually. The true-life cases reveal insurance fraud's high human costs. Innocent people are traumatized, injured and lose their savings. Consumers also pay higher premiums.

Welcome to the crime warp:

Pelican power. A phantom pelican doomed Andy House, who barreled his rare \$1-million Bugatti Veyron into a salty marsh to seek \$2.2-million of insurance. The Galveston, Tex.-area man claimed he swerved to avoid a pelican. Yet a passing car enthusiast filmed House surging into the lagoon. No pelican in the video. The birdbrained plot earns House up to 20 years in federal prison when he's sentenced.

Burning desire. Angela Garcia let her infant daughters die in a house fire she set for just \$64,000 worth of insurance money. The Cleveland woman said she crashed through a window and slid down the porch roof. Yet Garcia had no cuts, soot or bruises. Investigators also found suspicious burn patterns inside the rubble. Nor did she want the kids anymore. The court denied her bid to overturn an earlier sentence of two life terms.

Dollars & dents. Innocent traffic victims were hounded for months of worthless injury treatment by a crash cartel that handed out factory-line medicine. Personal-injury attorney Joseph Haddad erected a large network of corrupt doctors, chiro's and medical clinics. The Bridgeport, Conn. man used police reports to badger crash victims for useless treatment — often without exams or diagnoses. Haddad stole \$1.8 million of insurance money, and was handed 51 months in federal prison.

Armed for fraud. The NYPD officer Christopher Inserra moonlighted and fist-pumped as lead singer for a punk rock band while claiming a painfully injured right arm to steal more than \$31,000 in workers compensation money. Inserra said he couldn't even bend the arm. Yet video shows him flailing and thrashing around on stage. Inserra lucked out with three years of probation, yet threw away his police career. His band: Cousin Sleaze.

Cancer con. Sara Ylen lay near death with cervical cancer. She'd contracted cancer from being raped in a parking lot, she lied. Ylen's Lexington, Mich.-area community rallied around her, and she received \$122,000 in hospice care from her insurer. Ylen also sent the supposed rapist — an innocent man — to jail for 10 years. Except Ylen's cancer was fake, with forged medical records. Ylen received a year in jail, and the innocent man was released.

Chemo crimes. Seniors received painful chemotherapy for phantom cancer so Dr. Farid Fata could falsely bill Medicare \$125 million. Other chemo victims were so near death they were beyond the treatment. The Detroit-area man gave one cancer-free patient 155 chemo treatments. Another patient badly injured his head at Fata's office. Yet Fata made him receive full chemo before sending him to the ER. The patient later died. Fata faces up to 175 years in federal prison when sentenced.

Joint efforts. Orthopedist Dr. Alex Panos botched or faked thousands of joint surgeries to seek more than \$35 million worth of insurance money. The Poughkeepsie, N.Y. man rushed up to 20 suspect surgeries in a day. One operation lasted seven minutes. He botched surgeries, or opened up patients and stitched them up without making repairs. Christine Steele had two useless knee surgeries and can't work full-time anymore. Panos received 4 1/2 years in federal prison.

Deadly romance. Buddy Musso dreamed of being a cowboy singer. The New York City-area man also had the intellect of an 8-year-old. Suzanne Basso romanced and lured him to the Houston area. They married and Basso took out a small life policy that paid up to \$60,000 if Buddy died violently. Basso's gang cut, beat and doused him with painful bleach. His body was found in a ditch. Basso was executed.