

Insurance Fraud Hall of Shame: 9 of the Worst Scammers of 2017

By: Coalition Against Insurance Fraud

A kindly man's best friend burns him alive ... a doctor sticks needles and lasers into patients' healthy eyes ... a father kills his baby.

These extreme schemers are among the 9 worst insurance criminals of 2017. They were elected to the Insurance Fraud Hall of Shame by the Coalition Against Insurance Fraud.

The No-Class of 2017 spotlights the year's most brazen, bungling or vicious insurance fraudsters:

Burning desire. David O'Dell thought Joseph Meyers was his best friend. Meyers considered him disposable. The Wayland, N.Y. man burned O'Dell alive in his rickety old house for \$165,000 of home and life insurance.

Bumper crop. Fake whiplash claims from setup car wrecks soaked insurers for \$500,000 in Sacramento County, Calif. At least 100 vehicles lightly bumped each other, yet ringleader Michael Charles Young had car passengers faking painful whiplash.

Baby killer. Broke and jobless, Joaquin Rams murdered his baby son Prince for \$550,000 of life insurance. The Northern Virginia man took out life policies on Prince then killed him. Why did life insurers cover a baby?

Unsober sober homes. Desperate drug addicts sought a cleaner life in Kenny Chatman's sober homes. The South Florida man instead plied them with more drugs so they'd relapse. All for \$25 million of inflated rehab and drug testing. Some addicts overdosed and died.

Sightless scheme. Eye doctor Salmon Melgen stuck needles in patients' eyes and lasered their retinas in a \$136-million hoax. Luckless patients didn't need the painful and botched treatments. The South Florida doctor even treated blind patients, and one with a plastic eye.

Crash con burns. Rescuers picked up Theodore Robert Wright III floating in the Louisiana coast after a seeming crash landing of his flaming airplane. A ditzzy insurance con — Wright actually staged the plane crash, torched another airplane, sank a luxury sailboat and dunked a Lamborghini in a watery ditch.

Arson overpay. Buy cheap and claim big was Verdon Taylor's arson motto. The Northern Virginia man burned old homes and junky cars in a 30-fire binge. He stole nearly \$1 million of insurance money. Discounted old homes and furniture were billed as fancy expensive ones. Junky cars suddenly were new.

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Disabled disability scam. Crippled and impoverished Kentucky residents trusted lawyer Eric Conn to get them federal disability money. Instead Conn betrayed them in a mammoth \$600-million scam. He fooled Social Security into paying disability for thousands of healthy people. Hundreds of truly injured people lost desperately needed disability money while the feds solved Conn's mess.

Home invasion. Dr. Jacques Roy billed Medicare \$375 million for treating supposedly frail, homebound seniors. Many were homeless — or so healthy they happily mowed their lawns. It was one of the biggest Medicare scams ever. The Dallas-area man ran a boiler room cranking out hundreds of false homecare claims every day.