



## PRESS RELEASE

# Two Self-Professed Religious Leaders Who Used Physical and Psychological Abuse to Coerce Victims to Solicit Tens of Millions in Donations Federally Charged and Arrested

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**For Immediate Release**

Office of Public Affairs

A federal grand jury in the Eastern District of Michigan returned a ten-count [indictment](#) against two defendants for their alleged roles in a forced labor and money laundering conspiracy that victimized individuals in Michigan, Florida, Texas, and Missouri.

The two defendants, David Taylor, 53, and Michelle Brannon, 56, were arrested today in North Carolina and Florida in a nationwide takedown of their forced labor organization.

“Combating human trafficking is a top priority for the Department of Justice,” said Assistant Attorney General Harmeet K. Dhillon of the Justice Department’s Civil Rights Division. “We are committed to relentlessly pursuing and ending this scourge and obtaining justice for the victims.”

“We will use every lawful tool against human traffickers and seek justice for their victims,” said U.S. Attorney Jerome F. Gorgon Jr. for the Eastern District of Michigan. “A case like this is only

possible through a concerted effort with our federal partners across the country and the non-governmental agencies who provide victim support. We thank them all.”

“The indictment of David Taylor and Michelle Brannon demonstrates the FBI’s steadfast efforts to protect the American people from human exploitation and financial crimes, including forced labor and money laundering,” said Acting Special Agent in Charge Reuben Coleman of the FBI Detroit Field Office. “The alleged actions are deeply troubling. I want to thank the members of the FBI Detroit Field Office, with strong support from our federal and agency partners in the FBI Tampa Field Office, FBI Jacksonville Field Office, FBI St. Louis Field Office, FBI Charlotte Field Office, FBI Houston Field Office, and the Detroit IRS-CI Field Office, in addition to several local, county and state law enforcement partners, for their role in executing this multi-state operation. The FBI in Michigan will continue to investigate those who violate federal law and remain focused on ensuring the protection and safety of our nation.”

“Money laundering is tax evasion in progress, and in this case, the proceeds funded an alleged human trafficking ring and supported a luxury lifestyle under the guise of a religious ministry,” said Special Agent in Charge Karen Wingerd of IRS Criminal Investigation, Detroit Field Office. “IRS-CI stands committed to fighting human trafficking and labor exploitation, and pursuing those who hide their profits gained from the extreme victimization of the vulnerable.”

The indictment alleges that Taylor and Brannon are the leaders of Kingdom of God Global Church (KOGGC), formerly Joshua Media Ministries International (JMMI). Taylor refers to himself as “Apostle” and to Brannon as his Executive Director. Their organization ran a call center that solicited donations for KOGGC/JMMI every day. Taylor established his first call center in Taylor, Michigan, and then operated call centers in other locations in the United States including in Florida, Texas, and Missouri.

Taylor and Brannon, according to the indictment, compelled their victims to work at their call centers and to work for Taylor as his “armor bearers.” Armor bearers were Taylors’s personal servants who fulfilled Taylor’s demands around the clock. Taylor and Brannon controlled every aspect of the daily living of their victims. Victims slept in the call center facility or in a “ministry” house, and Taylor and Brannon did not permit them to leave without permission. Taylor demanded that his Armor Bearers transport women from ministry houses, airports, and other locations to Taylor’s location and ensured the women transported to Taylor took Plan B emergency contraceptives.

In addition, according to the indictment, Taylor and Brannon required victims to work in the call centers long hours without pay or perform other services for Taylor. Taylor set unobtainable daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly monetary donation goals for victims working in the call centers and required victims to follow the orders he created without question. If victims disobeyed an order or failed to reach his monetary goals, Taylor and Brannon punished the victims with public humiliation, additional work, food and shelter restrictions, psychological

abuse, forced repentance, sleep deprivation, physical assaults, and threats of divine judgment in the form of sickness, accidents, and eternal damnation.

KOGGC/JMMI received millions of dollars in donations each year through its call centers. Taylor and Brannon used much of the money to purchase luxury properties, luxury vehicles, and sporting equipment such as a boat, jet skis, and ATVs. In total, Taylor received approximately \$50 million in donations since 2014.

Defendant David Taylor will appear on the indictment today in Durham, North Carolina. Defendant Michelle Brannon will appear today on the indictment in Tampa, Florida.

Upon conviction, the alleged crimes carry the following penalties:

Conspiracy to Commit Forced Labor: up to 20 years' imprisonment and a fine up to \$250,000.

Forced Labor: up to 20 years' imprisonment and a fine up to \$250,000.

Conspiracy to Commit Money Laundering: up to 20 years' imprisonment and a fine up to \$500,000 or twice the value of the properties involved in the money laundering transactions.

This case was investigated by the FBI and IRS-CI. It will be prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Sarah Resnick Cohen for the Eastern District of Michigan and Trial Attorney Christina Randall-James of the Civil Rights Division's Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit.

Anyone who has information about human trafficking should report that information to the National Human Trafficking Hotline toll free at 1-888-373-7888, which operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Further information is available at [www.humantraffickinghotline.org](http://www.humantraffickinghotline.org). Information on the Justice Department's efforts to combat human trafficking can be found at [www.justice.gov/humantrafficking](http://www.justice.gov/humantrafficking).

*An indictment is merely an allegation. All defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.*

*Updated August 27, 2025*

## Topic

CIVIL RIGHTS

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Press Release Number: 25-885

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