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## State Probes Broward Mover Over Fraud, Extortion and Forgery

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— Categories: Crime



A Fort Lauderdale-based moving company operator is under intense scrutiny after a state investigation uncovered a long-running pattern of fraud, forgery, and coercive tactics. Shawn Thompson, the man behind 25 companies connected to Thompson Nation Holdings, is accused by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) of luring customers with lowball quotes, then jacking up prices once items were loaded, often holding possessions hostage until inflated payments were made.

In a 69-page administrative complaint filed in June, the state alleges 22 violations of Florida statutes. According to FDACS, Thompson's companies often required illegal cash-only payments, conducted unlicensed interstate moves, and operated without required state or federal licenses. Multiple customers report nearly identical experiences of being baited by low estimates and then extorted once their property was on the truck.

## Deceptive Operations

The complaint details the experiences of over a dozen customers who faced last-minute invoice spikes, threats, and in some cases, forged signatures on paperwork. In one account, a customer identified as A.S. said movers refused to complete his out-of-state move unless he paid an additional \$3,400. Police were called, eventually lowering the amount to an \$810 "shuttle service" fee. The move was executed by Fresh Start Moving and Storage, a company that lacked federal authorization for the job.

Another customer, S.B., endured both physical harm and emotional distress. The report states that "S.B. got into the moving truck, which held her household goods, and was hit by one of (Thompson Nation's) movers." She feared retaliation and did not pursue charges. Meanwhile, J.G. had her mailbox destroyed and was asked to pay hundreds more for storage, which wouldn't have been necessary had the movers arrived on time.

One of the more striking stories came from Nicolette Gonzalez, who sued Thompson in Miami-Dade County. Initially quoted \$1,146 for a move from Miami to Gainesville, she was presented with a \$4,719 invoice upon arrival. "They threatened and mocked Gonzalez and told her that if she did not pay the invoice amount, they were going to withhold her belongings and break them," the complaint says. She won a \$7,691 judgment and an injunction. In his ruling, Judge Michael Barket wrote, "Without question, then, Mr. Thompson was a direct participant in this unfair, deceptive, and fraudulent scheme."

Several of Thompson's companies, including Next Door Relocation and Stellar Relocation, advertised state-to-state services but were not authorized by the U.S. Department of Transportation to perform such operations. One customer paid over \$7,000 just to retrieve their belongings after initially agreeing to a much lower estimate.

If Thompson fails to respond to the complaint by submitting an Election of Rights within the required 21 days, the department may impose fines up to \$5,000 per violation. Thompson has not publicly commented and has previously requested that the press not contact him.

FDACS has clarified that continued non-compliance will result in final orders being issued without further notice.