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Tuesday, February 28, 2017

21 Defendants Plead Guilty to Racketeering Related to Murphy Village

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Columbia, South Carolina ---- United States Attorney Beth Drake stated today that Hannah Carroll, Rose M. Mulholland, Kim Mulholland, Caroline Sherlock, Catherine Carroll, Anthony Carroll, Johnny M. Sherlock, Mary Rita Sherlock, Jimmy Gorman, Leslie Gorman, Leslie Ann Sherlock, Jimmy J. Carroll, Mary Costello, Mary Gorman Carroll, Renee Carroll, Rose S. Mulholland, Susan Sherlock, Tommy Sherlock, William Carroll, and Johnny Mack, all of North Augusta, South Carolina, as well as Angela Askew, of Augusta, Georgia, have entered guilty pleas in federal court in Columbia, to Conspiracy to Commit Racketeering (RICO), a violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1962(d). United States District Judge J. Michelle Childs of Columbia accepted the guilty pleas and will impose sentences after she has reviewed the presentence reports which will be prepared by the U.S. Probation Office.

Evidence presented at the change of plea hearing established that the defendants and others agreed, that a criminal enterprise operated in and around North Augusta, South Carolina. This criminal enterprise consists of both residents of an insular group known as Travelers, as well as outsiders that helped those residents. The Travelers live in a defined geographic location of North Augusta that is commonly known as Murphy Village. The Travelers have a particular lifestyle, including a unique language called "Cant," and are funded largely by illegal schemes. The Travelers and certain outsiders (like car salesmen, insurance agents, and tax preparers) agreed to commit numerous racketeering activities that included mail and wire fraud related to life insurance applications, loan applications, as well as fraud related to government benefits such as food stamps, Medicaid, and tax refunds. Additionally, when the fraud was successful and money came into the group the money was laundered through numerous



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channels to include structured deposits and withdrawals to avoid reporting requirements.

Ms. Drake stated, “This cooperative investigation between federal, state and local authorities has effectively dismantled a significant component of the complex criminal element operating out of Murphy Village. However, the investigation continues. We want to recognize the tremendous commitment by the local, state and federal authorities to investigate the wide-spread fraud.” United States Attorney Drake thanked the FBI, the United States Marshals Service, IRS Criminal Investigations, the USDA Office of Inspector General-Investigations, the Postal Inspector’s Office, the South Carolina Attorney General’s Medicaid Fraud Unit, the Second Circuit Solicitor’s Office, Aiken County Sheriff’s Office and South Carolina Department of Social Services for all the work their agencies did in the investigation and prosecution.

FBI Special Agent in Charge Alphonso Norris stated: “Today’s pleas go a long way in dismantling a criminal organization that has affected citizens in several states. This was made possible with the cooperation of our federal, state and local partners.”

Kelvin Washington, U.S. Marshal for the District of South Carolina, stated: “Working with numerous federal and local agencies on this case has shown again how cooperation and dedication to protecting the citizens of South Carolina speaks volumes about our judicial system. This case produced many assets which will be forfeited and sold so the victims may receive payment for the fraud they endured. It is with immense appreciation to our partners for the success of this case, the U.S. Marshals are only a small piece of this case, but we know we can all work together to serve the citizens of South Carolina.”

South Carolina Attorney General, Alan Wilson stated “I am pleased with this outcome, but this is certainly not the end. We will continue to work closely with authorities at the local, state and federal levels to bring these individuals to justice and expose this extensive criminal enterprise.”

“Today’s pleas are another example of IRS-CI’s dedication to bringing individuals to justice who engage in helping taxpayers evade their tax obligations,” said Acting Special Agent in Charge Michael C. Daniels. “We will continue to vigorously pursue both taxpayers who avoid paying their fair share and the unscrupulous professionals who facilitate their actions.”

The maximum penalty for Conspiracy to Commit Racketeering is imprisonment for 20 years and/or a fine of \$250,000.

The case was investigated by agents of the FBI, the United States Marshals Service, IRS Criminal Investigations, the USDA Office of Inspector General-Investigations, the Postal Inspector’s Office, the South Carolina Attorney General’s Medicaid Fraud Unit, the Second Circuit Solicitor’s Office, Aiken County Sheriff’s Office and South Carolina Department of Social Services. Assistant United States Attorneys Jim May and Jay Richardson of Columbia and Rhett Dehart of Charleston are prosecuting the case.

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