



U.S. Department of Justice

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For Immediate Release:

Contact: Shannon Bass (313) 226-9530

March 1, 2005

Event: Indictment

Defendant: Matt Mihsen, 47, of Dallas, Texas

MAN CHARGED WITH ATTEMPTING TO SMUGGLE

CASH AND EXPORT PROHIBITED ITEMS TO SYRIA

MATT MIHSEN, age 47, of Dallas, Texas was indicted on March 1, 2005 and charged in three counts: **Count 1**, attempting to export money and goods from the United States to Syria without the authority, permit or license from the Secretary of State required by Executive Order 13338 (50 U.S.C. § 1701); **Count 2**, attempting to smuggle over \$10,000 in United States currency from the United States to Syria (31 U.S.C. § 5332); and **Count 3**, making false statements to federal agents (18 U.S.C. § 1001). Mihsen will be arraigned on the charges on March 8, 2005.

According to the indictment, Mihsen was born in Syria, and he became a naturalized United States citizen in 1991. Mihsen is a licensed private investigator, a licensed pilot, and he has a license to drive commercial vehicles.

The indictment alleges that on the morning of February 15, 2005, Mihsen left Dallas, Texas on Northwest Flight 704 to Detroit Metropolitan Airport (DTW); his ultimate destination was Damascus, Syria. Mihsen checked his luggage in Dallas, planning to retrieve it in Syria upon his arrival on February 16, 2005. An outbound inspection of Mihsen's luggage at Detroit Metropolitan Airport revealed that he was attempting to export certain items to Syria, including:

- a. one hand held Taser stun device;
- b. two boxes of Black Talon 9 mm ammunition containing 40 rounds;
- c. one Bushnell .22 rifle scope;
- d. oleoresin capsicum pepper spray ("Mace");
- e. one Diamond Tech Pro diamond tester;
- f. one bullet-proof vest; and
- g. three Geiger counters.

Exportation to Syria of any product of the United States except food and medicine, without first obtaining a license or permit issued by the Secretary of State or the Secretary of Commerce, violates Executive Order 13338 signed by President George W. Bush on May 11, 2004, in response to "the actions of the Government of Syria, in supporting terrorism, continuing its occupation of Lebanon, pursuing weapons of mass destruction and missile programs, and undermining United States and international efforts with respect to the stabilization and reconstruction of Iraq, [which] constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States."

In addition to the listed items, the indictment alleges that Mihsen knowingly concealed \$13,256 in United States currency on his person and in an article of luggage, and attempted to transport it from the United States to Damascus, Syria. Mihsen denied having more than \$10,000 in currency with him when he was questioned by federal agents, and he failed to declare the currency in a Report of International Transportation of Currency or Monetary Instruments Form 4790, as required by federal law.

In announcing the indictment, United States Attorney Craig S. Morford commended the work of the Special Agents of the Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Protection, who conducted the investigation. The prosecution is being handled by Assistant United States Attorney Cynthia Oberg.

An indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. The defendants are entitled to a fair trial in which it will be the government's burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.



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March 7, 2005

EVENT: Guilty Plea

**DEFENDANT: Mahmoud Youssef Kourani, 34
Dearborn Man Pleads Guilty to Conspiracy to Provide Support to Hizballah**

Mahmoud Youssef Kourani formerly of Dearborn, Michigan and Yater, Lebanon pleaded guilty to Conspiracy to Provide Material Support to the Designated Foreign Terrorist Organization, Hizballah, Tuesday, March 1 in federal court in Detroit. The guilty plea was entered before United States District Judge Robert H. Cleland.

The information presented to the court at the time of the guilty plea showed that Mahmoud Kourani organized and hosted meetings at his Dearborn residence during Ramadan of 2002. During the meetings, a guest speaker from Lebanon solicited the participants to make donations to Hizballah. Pursuant to the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, effective October 8, 1997, the Secretary of State designated Hizballah as a foreign terrorist organization by finding that the organization is a foreign organization that engages in terrorist activity threatening the security of United States nationals or the national security of the United States. Hizballah, also known as "Party of God," also known as "Islamic Jihad," among other

names, is a worldwide terrorist network which has conducted numerous high profile terrorist attacks in the name of Islamic fundamentalism. The money solicited by Kourani's conspiracy was intended to support Hizballah's "orphans of martyrs" program to benefit the families of those killed in Hizballah terrorist operations or by Hizballah's enemies.

In announcing the guilty plea, United States Attorney Craig S. Morford commended the work of the Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, who conducted the investigation, and the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Department of Homeland Security, and Assistant United States Attorney Kenneth R. Chadwell who handled the prosecution.

"Combating terrorism is the number one priority of the Department of Justice, and this prosecution underscores our commitment to disrupt the funding of terrorist organizations," said United States Attorney Craig S. Morford. "Raising money for designated terrorist organizations, like Hizballah, is a serious crime which will be vigorously pursued in the Eastern District of Michigan."

Daniel D. Roberts, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, said "The FBI views counter-terrorism as its highest priority. We thank all the members of Detroit's Joint Terrorism Task Force for their assistance in the successful outcome of this investigation. This investigation is further evidence of the FBI's commitment to combat terrorism nationwide, including the Detroit area."

A copy of the superseding information is attached. Sentencing is scheduled for June 14, 2005. Kourani faces a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine, to be followed by deportation to Lebanon.



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March 7, 2005

EVENT: Guilty Verdicts

DEFENDANT: Allan A. Kuehnemund, age 56, of Au Gres, Michigan

On March 4, 2005, a federal jury convicted Alan A. Kuehnemund, age 56, of Au Gres, Michigan, on 16 felony charges arising out of Mr. Kuehnemund's scheme to fraudulently obtain crop insurance between 1998 and 2003.

The trial began on February 23, 2005 before U.S. District Judge David M. Lawson in Bay City, Michigan. The evidence established that the defendant repeatedly supplied false information and falsified records to fraudulently obtain over \$2 million in crop insurance from various crop insurance companies. The crop insurance program is heavily subsidized by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Federal Crop Insurance Corporation.

The case was investigated by agents from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Inspector General. Sentencing is currently set for June 16, 2005 at 2:30 p.m.



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March 10, 2005

EVENT: Sentencing

DEFENDANT: Shane Duvall Bradford, 24

Belleville Man Sentenced to Ten Years for Gun and Drug Violations.

On March 10, 2005, Shane Duvall Bradford, age twenty-four, of Belleville, Michigan, was sentenced to 120 months in prison, and four years of supervised release, for possessing, with the intent to distribute crack and powder cocaine, and for possessing a firearm in furtherance of those drug trafficking crimes. The sentence was imposed by United States District Judge Denise Page Hood. Bradford pled guilty to the drug and firearm violations before Judge Hood on September 9, 2004.

Bradford's conviction resulted from a routine traffic stop made by deputies of the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Department. The deputies stopped Bradford's car in Ypsilanti Township for playing loud music in violation of a local ordinance. During a search of Bradford's car, a deputy noticed a tear in the back rest of the passenger seat and, upon closer examination, the deputy found a .40 caliber, Ruger, semi-automatic handgun, over nine grams of crack cocaine and over seventy-three grams of powder cocaine. The narcotics were

packaged for sale. The deputy also recovered \$4,755, in cash from the back rest. At the time of his arrest, Bradford told the deputies that he intended to sell the drugs and that the handgun belonged to him. It was later determined that Bradford had a previous felony conviction and was prohibited from possessing a firearm.

In announcing Bradford's sentence, United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy commended the investigative work of the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Department, the Special Agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), and Assistant United States Attorney Michael J. Riordan, who handled the prosecution.

"Combating drug trafficking and gun violence is one of the top priorities of the Department of Justice, and this prosecution underscores our commitment to take those who deal drugs and illegally possess guns off of the streets for a long time," said United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy. "The United States Attorney's Office will continue to work with local law enforcement agencies, such as the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Department, to make our neighborhoods safer," added Murphy. ATF Special Agent-In-Charge Valerie Goddard stated that "this significant sentence should send a message that the combination of drugs and guns are a lethal mix. There are specific Federal laws that impose mandatory sentencing provisions for those who choose to possess and use guns to protect themselves and their proceeds while selling drugs."



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March 15, 2005

EVENT: Sentencing

DEFENDANT: John A. Rapanos, 69, of Midland, Michigan

United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy announced that John A Rapanos, 69, of Midland, Michigan was sentenced today in federal court in Detroit to three years' probation, a fine of \$185,000, and 200 hours of community service as a result of his conviction for discharging pollutants into wetlands in violation of federal law. Senior United States District Judge Lawrence P. Zatkoff imposed the sentence.

Mr. Murphy stated that "Mr. Rapanos was convicted after a jury found evidence in March 1995 that he filled approximately 50 acres of wetlands without obtaining a required permit. Mr. Rapanos also repeatedly failed to comply with both state and federal civil orders to cease and desist this activity, and to restore the wetlands, which resulted in criminal prosecution. The delay between the conclusion of the trial and this sentencing was as a result of several appeals, all of which were resolved in favor of the government."

A spokesperson for the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality has noted that

“in addition to filling in many acres of wetlands, Mr. Rapanos also removed nearly all trees and vegetation, turning forested wetlands into a desert-like scene. Zoning and environmental laws limit how Mr. Rapanos develops his property . Michigan environmental law does not prohibit all development on regulated wetlands; it requires that one obtain a state permit before developing and filling them in, but Mr. Rapanos never applied.”

Mr. Murphy commended the United States Environmental Protection Agency, Criminal Investigative Division, and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, for their hard work and professional investigation of this case which led to the successful prosecution of Mr. Rapanos.



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March 11, 2005

EVENT: Sentencing

DEFENDANT: Shane Duvall Bradford, 24

Belleville Man Sentenced to Ten Years for Gun and Drug Violations.

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March 10, 2005

Event: Sentencing

Defendant: Tracy Carmichael, 41, of Detroit

Date: March 10, 2005

Tracy Carmichael, age 41, of Detroit, was sentenced today by United States District Denise Page Hood to serve six months in the custody of the Bureau of Prisons to be followed by six months of home confinement and two years on supervised release, and to pay restitution of \$86,390 to the U.S. Internal Revenue Service as a result of his conviction on 17 counts of Aiding and Assisting in the Preparation and Presentation of False and Fraudulent Income Tax Returns, announced U.S. Attorney Stephen J. Murphy.

Mr. Carmichael was found guilty of all 17 counts by a federal jury sitting in Detroit on June 22, 2004 after approximately four hours of deliberations which concluded a week-long trial before Judge Hood.

Mr. Murphy stated that, "The evidence presented at trial proved that Mr. Carmichael, working as an income-tax preparer in Detroit and Southfield, aided and assisted 11 taxpayers in the preparation and presentation of 17 individual income tax returns which were false as to material matters, from February 3, 2000 through February 5, 2001. The evidence established that these tax returns contained false information concerning business losses, itemized deductions and rental real estate losses. In many cases, Mr. Carmichael advised his clients to claim business losses even though they operated no businesses at all. In others, Mr. Carmichael prepared tax returns containing substantially inflated employee business deductions, charitable contributions and rental real estate expenses.

Mr. Murphy commended the Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation Division,

whose investigation led to the successful prosecution of Mr. Carmichael.



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DOJ ENRD (202) 515-2007

March 16, 2005

EVENT: Sentencing
DEFENDANT: Gazi George
DATE: March 16, 2005

**Vice President of Detroit Hazardous Waste Firm Sentenced to 27 Months Imprisonment
for Environmental Crimes**

United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy, III and Assistant Attorney General for the Environment and Natural Resources Division Thomas L. Sansonetti announced today that Gazi George, former Vice President of the City Environmental facility in Detroit, formerly owned by Texas-based U.S. Liquids, Inc., was sentenced today to 27 months imprisonment and a fine of \$60,000, after pleading guilty to felony violations of the Clean Water Act (CWA) and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). George's plea was entered on September 24, 2004, in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan.

The August 21, 2003, indictment charged George, 53, and facility operations manager Donald Roeser, 49, with conspiracy to violate the CWA, conspiracy to violate the RCRA, violating the CWA by bypassing treatment and tampering with a monitoring device, and violating the RCRA by causing the transportation of hazardous waste to unpermitted facilities and making false statements. In December, 2004, Roeser was sentenced to 12 months imprisonment and a

fine of \$60,000.

City Environmental was a waste treatment facility located at 1923 Frederick Street in Detroit, Michigan. It was in the business of receiving, treating, hauling and disposing of liquid and solid hazardous and non-hazardous waste. City Environmental was authorized to introduce pollutants to the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD) system pursuant to a permit that the DWSD issued to the facility. City Environmental's permit set forth limits on the types and concentrations of pollutants that the company could discharge. The permit also required that City Environmental regularly take samples of its effluent to determine whether the facility was in compliance with permit requirements. In order to comply with permit discharge requirements, City Environmental was required to treat much of the wastewater before discharging it into the sanitary sewer.

During the period from September 1998 until August 1999, as a result of the defendant's conduct, millions of gallons of untreated waste went to the sewers of Detroit, which then go to the Detroit DWSD, then to the Detroit River. The conduct also resulted in thousands of tons of hazardous waste being sent to a landfill that was not designed to handle hazardous waste.

Assistant Attorney General Thomas L. Sansonetti of the Environment and Natural Resources Division of the U.S. Department of Justice stated: "The 27 month sentence imposed on Gazi George sends a strong message that intentional violation of environmental laws enacted to protect public health and the environment will not be tolerated."

United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy, III added: "Dr. George's sentence serves as a reminder that those who intentionally violate our environmental laws do so at their peril. We will continue to do what we can to deter individuals and businesses from committing this type of crime."

The case was investigated by the U.S. EPA's Criminal Investigation Division and the Federal Bureau of Investigation with the assistance of the EPA's National Enforcement Investigations Center, and was prosecuted by the Environmental Crimes Section of the Department of

Justice, Environment and Natural Resources Division and the United States Attorney's Office in Detroit.

Southeast Michigan has a continuing Multi-agency Environmental Crimes Task Force, which includes the U.S. EPA Criminal Investigation Division; the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Office of Criminal Investigations; the U.S. Coast Guard; U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement; the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service; the Federal Bureau of Investigation; Environment Canada; Ontario Ministry of the Environment; the Macomb County Prosecutor's Office; the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Division; the Michigan Attorney General's Office; and the U.S. Attorney's Office. Information concerning environmental crimes may be directed to 734-692-7650.



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March 10, 2005

Event: Sentencing

Defendant: Robert Bowman Wright, 46, of Detroit

Date: March 10, 2005

Robert Bowman Wright, 46, of Detroit, was sentenced today by United States District Chief Judge Bernard A. Friedman to serve six months in a community corrections center and three years of supervised release, and to pay restitution of \$44,000 to the U.S. Postal Service as a result of his conviction for making a false statement in connection with the receipt of federal workers' compensation benefits, announced U.S. Attorney Stephen J. Murphy.

Mr. Wright pled guilty to making false statements about his ability to return to work at the Postal Service following an automobile accident. Mr. Wright admitted that his condition had improved enough for him to return to work, but that he opted instead to continue receiving disability benefits rather than return to work. This admission came after video surveillance of Mr. Wright established that he could engage in activities inconsistent with his stated disabilities.

Prior to imposing sentence, Judge Friedman noted that he wanted to send a message of deterrence against this type of criminal activity.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Jennifer Gorland. Mr.

Murphy commended the U.S. Postal Service and the Department of Labor for their investigation of this case which led to the successful prosecution of Mr. Wright.



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March 22, 2005

EVENT: Guilty Plea

DEFENDANT: Ahmed Hannan

Detroit Man Pleads Guilty to Conspiracy to Commit Mail Fraud

Ahmed Hannan, formerly a resident of Morocco and later of Detroit, Michigan was sentenced today to time served (approximately 42 months) upon his guilty plea today to Conspiracy to Commit Mail Fraud, in federal court in Detroit. The guilty plea was entered before United States District Judge Gerald E. Rosen. The fourth superseding indictment presented to the court at the time of the guilty plea showed that Ahmed Hannan conspired to commit mail fraud in a scheme designed to fraudulently obtain insurance related benefits from the Titan Insurance Company. Mr. Hannan claimed to have been physically injured in a July 5, 2001 motor vehicle accident in the city of Dearborn, Michigan. He then submitted false and fraudulent invoices purporting to show that he received certain physical therapy that he did not receive, submitted documentation reflecting incurred costs relating to household replacement services when no services had ever been provided and false claims for lost wages when in fact during the time and date reflecting the lost

wages, Mr. Hannan was employed or otherwise enrolled in a truck driving school.

Ahmed Hannan, and his co-defendant Karim Koubriti, were originally defendants in a February 11, 2003 third superseding indictment in the Eastern District of Michigan on the charge of Conspiracy to Engage in Fraud and Misuse of Visas, Permits and other Documents in violation of 18 U.S.C. section 371. A new trial was ordered; Koubriti and Hannan having been originally convicted on this count, as well as Conspiracy to Provide Material Support or Resources to Terrorists, after a jury trial in June 2003. The government agreed to the defendants' motions for new trial along with dismissing the Material Support charge. The present indictment, which no longer includes the Conspiracy in Fraud and Misuse of Visas, Permits and other Documents charges, is focused primarily on the alleged July-August 2001 auto accident insurance fraud scheme. Co-defendant Karim Koubriti has entered a plea of not guilty and is awaiting trial.

In announcing the guilty plea and the sentencing, United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy commended the work of the Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, who conducted the investigation, and Assistant United States Attorneys Alan Gershel and Eric Straus who handled the prosecution.

A copy of the superseding indictment is attached. Hannan faces immediate deportation to Morocco.