



U.S. Department of Justice

**Stephen J. Murphy
United States Attorney
Eastern District of Michigan**

*Suite 2001
211 West Fort Street
Detroit, Michigan 48226-3277
Fax: (313) 226-3561*

For Immediate Release:

Contact: Gina Balaya (313) 226-9758

September 1, 2005

EVENT: Sentencing

Defendant: Benjamin Benford, II

FORMER RIVER ROUGE SCHOOLS OFFICIAL SENTENCED

Benjamin Benford II, an ex-Superintendent of the River Rouge Schools, age 56, was sentenced to 15 months imprisonment by United States District Judge Victoria Roberts, announced United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy. Mr. Murphy was joined in the announcement by Special Agent in Charge Daniel D. Roberts, Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Benford had previously pleaded guilty to Conspiracy to Interfere with Commerce by Extortion. In addition, Benford was ordered to pay \$23,305 in restitution to the victims of the extortion.

Assistant U.S. Attorney John Engstrom, who prosecuted the case, stated that, "the information presented to the court at the time of the plea and sentencing showed that between 1998 and 2002, the defendant was the Superintendent of the River Rouge School District and responsible for the annual evaluation of administrative employees. During that time period, Mr. Benford along with an administrative assistant, arranged for all administrative employees to pay him cash on Boss's Day, Christmas, his birthday, and around the time of school board elections. Depending upon the status of each employee, he/she would be expected to pay between \$30.00 and \$200.00 per event. Mr. Benford acknowledged that because of his position as Superintendent, his staff could reasonably believe that if the cash payments were not made, they might suffer some sort of economic harm."

In imposing the sentence, Judge Roberts characterized Benford's offense as "contemptible" and noted that it "should never have happened."

Mr. Murphy commended the agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation for its investigation of the case which has led to several successful prosecutions.



U.S. Department of Justice

**Stephen J. Murphy
United States Attorney
Eastern District of Michigan**

*Suite 2001
211 West Fort Street
Detroit, Michigan 48226-3277
Fax: (313) 226-3561*

For Immediate Release:

Contact: Gina Balaya (313) 226-9758

September 21, 2005

EVENT: Guilty Plea

Defendant: James Roy Sylvester

SAGINAW AREA MAN CONVICTED ON DRUG CHARGES

United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy announced that a jury that had deliberated approximately four hours returned guilty verdicts Wednesday, September 21, 2005, against James Roy Sylvester, Jr., 46, a Saginaw area resident, for various violations of federal drug and firearms laws. The 7-day trial was conducted before United States District Judge David M. Lawson in Bay City, Michigan.

Sylvester was found guilty of possessing 5 kilograms of cocaine, over 20 grams of crack cocaine, as well as OxyContin, Valium, Vicodin and codeine pills, all with the intent to distribute those drugs. According to the evidence, Sylvester traveled and caused others to travel to California in connection with his drug business. Sylvester also possessed firearms in connection with his drug offenses, and conspired with others to traffic in 5 kilograms or more of cocaine. The jury also found that Sylvester, a convicted felon, possessed firearms in violation of federal law.

Mr. Murphy stated, "This case is an excellent example of local, state and federal law enforcement agencies joining forces against armed drug traffickers. I commend the efforts all of the officers and agents who worked on this investigation."

The case was investigated by state and federal law enforcement agencies in Michigan, Nebraska and California, including Drug Enforcement Agency agents and task force officers in

all three states, officers employed by the Saginaw County Sheriff's Department, the Saginaw City Police Department, the Michigan State Police, the Bay City Police Department, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, the Nebraska State Patrol, the Michigan State Police Forensic Laboratory and the DEA Laboratory in Chicago. Special assistance in the prosecution of the case was provided by the U.S. Marshal Service. The Saginaw DEA office coordinated the joint investigation of this case.

Sentencing of Mr. Sylvester was scheduled by Judge David M. Lawson for December 22, 2005 at 2:30 p.m. The sentence will be based on the nature of the offenses and the criminal background of the defendant.



U.S. Department of Justice

Stephen J. Murphy
United States Attorney
Eastern District of Michigan

*Suite 2001
211 West Fort Street
Detroit, Michigan 48226-3277
Fax: (313) 226-3561*

For Immediate Release:

Contact: Gina Balaya (313) 226-9758
Stephen Moore, IRS CI (313) 234-2410

September 8, 2005

EVENT: Guilty Plea

Defendant: Michail Aronov

**Chicago Area Man Pleads Guilty to Conspiracies to Commit Forced Labor,
Immigration, and Money Laundering Crimes in Connection with the
Compelled Servitude of Exotic Dancers in the Metro Detroit Area**

Stephen J. Murphy, United States Attorney, Eastern District of Michigan, and Bradley J. Schlozman, Acting Assistant Attorney General, Civil Rights Division, announced that Michail Aronov, age 33, a Lithuanian citizen residing in the Chicago, IL area, has pleaded guilty to charges that he conspired with others to compel Eastern Europeans to serve as exotic dancers in the metropolitan Detroit area through forced labor, trafficking, document servitude and obstruction, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 1589, 1590, 1592, and 1519. Aronov also pled guilty to engaging in an immigration conspiracy involving the women, which included the illegal recruitment, transportation, and harboring of the women, in violation of 8 U.S.C. §§ 1324(a)(1)(A)(ii), (iii), and (iv). Finally, Aronov pled guilty to conspiring to launder the proceeds of the compelled servitude and immigration crimes, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 1956 and 1957. Aronov pled guilty before United States District Judge Victoria A. Roberts on Thursday, September 8, 2005. Aronov was arrested in February 2005 when two Ukrainian women escaped from their servitude and sought help from federal agents.

According to a factual stipulation attached to the plea agreement and other court records, Mr. Aronov admitted today that he and his business partners operated a business enterprise from 2001 through 2005 called "Beauty Search, Inc.", premised on importing, brokering, and managing Eastern European women who served as dancers at exotic dance clubs in the Southeast Michigan area, where they held the women in a condition of compelled service, collecting their earnings. Aronov admitted that he and his partners employed a number of coercive methods to compel and maintain the continued service of the dancers, including: confiscating the women's passports and other legal documents to increase the women's legal vulnerabilities and to prevent or delay their escape; imposing debts as large as \$25,000 per women, which the women had to repay over time through earnings from exotic dancing; maintaining the women's social and linguistic isolation; imposing "rules" designed to isolate the women from outsiders who might encourage or facilitate their escape; enforcing compliance with various real and arbitrary rules through interrogations, monetary penalties, physical violence and threats of physical violence (including brandishing a Baretta 9 millimeter semi-automatic handgun); periodically searching the women's apartments, while they were at work, for photographs evidencing prohibited social contacts or money that should have been turned over to Beauty Search, Inc.; relating stories of previous mistreatment of women, both real and imagined, in order to instill fear in the women; and threatening to turn the women into the authorities, who would purportedly jail and deport them because of their illegal immigrant status.

"Holding another human being in involuntary servitude is morally reprehensible," said Bradley J. Schlozman, Acting Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division. "Today's guilty plea sends a clear message that victims can safely place their trust in federal law enforcement because we will swiftly investigate and vigorously prosecute those who would attempt to profit at the expense of another's freedom."

"We have no tolerance for modern-day human slavery." said U.S. Attorney Stephen J. Murphy. "We will never ease our federal effort to find and prosecute those who use force and threats to hold people in bondage. We will bring the full force of federal law to stamp out these pernicious acts."

Brian Moskowitz, Special Agent in Charge, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Detroit, Michigan, stated, "Today's guilty plea stands as an example to all those who would deceive people to come to the United States, and then force them into slavery for profit. Our ICE special agents are committed to working with our law enforcement partners to

identify, investigate and prosecute human traffickers. Such people have no regard for human life." Moskowitz heads the ICE Detroit Office of Investigations, which includes the states of Michigan and Ohio.

FBI Special Agent in Charge Daniel Roberts stated that, "The FBI working with its law enforcement partners will continue to aggressively investigate cases against those who victimize persons by forcing them into slavery for profit and violating their civil rights."

Aronov remains in custody pending his sentencing. He was referred to the United States Probation Department for a presentence investigation. Aronov faces a statutory maximum sentence of up to thirty years in prison or a fine of \$750,000, or both. The parties further agreed that the Court may enter an order of restitution and a forfeiture money judgment against Aronov of at least \$537,043. Aronov has agreed to cooperate in the government's continuing investigation and prosecution of others, and could receive a sentence reduction if his cooperation is deemed to be substantial assistance under the federal Sentencing Guidelines.

The case is being investigated by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation, and the State Department Diplomatic Security Service. Assistant United States Attorney Mark Chutkow and Lou de Baca, Senior Litigation Counsel at the Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Criminal Section, are prosecuting the case.

The Justice Department has made human trafficking a significant priority. Since 2001, the Justice Department has prosecuted 269 traffickers -- a three-fold increase in cases filed over the previous four years. As of August 2005, the Justice Department had 206 open trafficking investigations.



U.S. Department of Justice

**Stephen J. Murphy
United States Attorney
Eastern District of Michigan**

***Suite 2001
211 West Fort Street
Detroit, Michigan 48226-3277
Fax: (313) 226-3561***

For Immediate Release:

Contact: Gina Balaya (313) 226-9758
Stephen Moore, IRS CI (313) 234-2410

September 13, 2005

EVENT: Sentencing

Defendant: April Jones

Detroit Preparer's Skills to Deceive Lands Her in Jail for Preparing False Returns

United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy and Maurice M. Aouate, Special Agent in Charge, Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation announced that April Jones, 35, of Detroit, Michigan, was sentenced today to 35 months in prison followed by one year supervised release. United States District Court Judge Robert H. Cleland imposed this sentence and also order Ms. Jones to cooperate with the Internal Revenue Service. On May 13, 2005, Ms. Jones was convicted by a jury in federal court on 31 counts of aiding and assisting in the preparation of false Federal income tax returns.

Evidence presented at trial showed that during 1999 through 2002, Ms. Jones gained larger refunds and minimized tax liabilities through her budding tax service for co-workers at a local auto plant and their referrals. She did this by adding fictitious job search deductions, gifts to charity, and un-reimbursed employee expenses, causing the Internal Revenue Service to suffer a tax loss of over \$70,000. In most cases, Ms. Jones failed to sign the returns as the preparer even though she was collecting a fee. At sentencing, the court determined that her relevant conduct, involving 51 additional tax returns, led to a total tax loss of over \$244,000.

Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation became aware of Ms. Jones' activities during their investigation of Maquilla Yvonne Squire, 43, of Detroit, Michigan, another local auto plant employee. During questioning, many of the taxpayers who utilized Ms. Squires' services, identified Ms. Jones as the return preparer on their subsequent tax returns. On May 11, 2004, Ms. Squire was sentenced to 27 months imprisonment as the result of pleading guilty to two counts of aiding and assisting in the preparation of false and fraudulent tax returns, after creating over \$730,000 in false deductions.

United States Attorney Murphy stated that "We take tax enforcement extremely seriously in this district. Abusive tax return preparers, such as this defendant, will always be investigated and prosecuted to the fullest extent by my office. It is important to maintain a system of voluntary tax compliance for all taxpayers and this conviction serves that goal."

Mr. Aouate stated, "abusive return preparers try and convince taxpayers that they have developed the necessary knowledge and skills to deceive the Internal Revenue Service, which is usually far from the truth."

Mr. Murphy commended the special agents of the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation. Assistant United States Attorney Dawn N. Ison prosecuted the case.



U.S. Department of Justice

**Stephen J. Murphy
United States Attorney
Eastern District of Michigan**

*Suite 2001
211 West Fort Street
Detroit, Michigan 48226-3277
Fax: (313) 226-3561*

For Immediate Release:

Contact: Gina Balaya (313) 226-9758

September 14, 2005

EVENT: Superseding Indictment

Defendant: Carl Marlinga

FORMER MACOMB COUNTY PROSECUTOR RE-INDICTED

Former Macomb County Prosecutor Carl Marlinga was indicted today by a federal grand jury in Detroit on charges of bribery, mail and wire fraud, false statements to the Federal Election Commission, and violations of federal campaign finance laws.

The indictment contains six counts, which allege that Mr. Marlinga improperly used his position as Prosecuting Attorney to influence the Michigan Supreme Court when it reversed the 1991 criminal conviction of Jeffrey Moldowan, who had been convicted in Macomb County of kidnaping, criminal sexual conduct, and assault with intent to murder. The indictment charges that he did so in return for campaign contributions and fund-raising efforts for his 2001/2002 campaign for election to the United States Congress. The superseding indictment also charges that Mr. Marlinga exploited his position as Prosecuting Attorney in another criminal case in return for campaign contributions and fund-raising efforts, and that some of the contributions were disguised to hide the identity of the actual contributor.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Michigan State Police.

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

Mr. Marlinga was originally indicted in April 2004. The new indictment was necessitated by a ruling of the court earlier this year.



U.S. Department of Justice

**Stephen J. Murphy
United States Attorney
Eastern District of Michigan**

*Suite 2001
211 West Fort Street
Detroit, Michigan 48226-3277
Fax: (313) 226-3561*

For Immediate Release:

Contact: Gina Balaya (313) 226-9758
John Freeman (313) 226-9191

September 2, 2005

EVENT: Complaint

Defendant: Raelin Coleman

SOUTHFIELD MAN CHARGED WITH FEDERAL FIREARMS OFFENSE

A Southfield, Michigan man was arrested early today by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents, in cooperation with officers from the Michigan State Police and Southfield Police Department for transporting a firearm in foreign commerce with the intent of committing a felony.

According to the affidavit filed in support of the federal criminal complaint, on August 22, 2005, eyewitnesses reported that Raelin Coleman, age 20 engaged in a dispute with an individual known to law enforcement (hereafter Victim #1) at his residence in Windsor, Ontario, Canada. COLEMAN, along with two female subjects (identified as Halimo RIRASH and Ulimo RIRASH), left Victim #1's residence and entered the United States by means of the Detroit-Windsor Tunnel at approximately 12:52 a.m. According to information provided by Windsor Police Department Detectives, which was obtained from witnesses, COLEMAN drove to his residence in Southfield, Michigan and retrieved a Remington Model 870 12 gauge shotgun. COLEMAN placed the shotgun in his vehicle, identified as a 2000 Ford Taurus, black in color, bearing a known Michigan license number, and returned to Victim #1's residence.

On August 23, 2005, at approximately 2:20 a.m., COLEMAN arrived at Victim #1's residence in Windsor, Ontario, Canada, where COLEMAN, as well as the two female subjects exited the vehicle. An argument again ensued between COLEMAN and Victim #1, and COLEMAN retrieved the previously identified Remington 870 shotgun from the backseat area of the 2000 Ford Taurus. COLEMAN then fired one shot at Victim # 1 from close range, striking Victim #1 in the upper left thigh area. COLEMAN returned to the identified vehicle, along with the two female subjects and departed.

Upon departing Victim #1's residence, COLEMAN discarded the identified Remington 870 shotgun into the Detroit River. At approximately 2:46 a.m., COLEMAN re-entered the United States via the Ambassador Bridge, in Detroit, Michigan.

On August 23, 2005, at approximately 4:10 a.m., Halimo RIRASH and Ulimo RIRASH were arrested by Windsor Police Department and charged with attempted murder.

Based on information obtained from at least one person known to law enforcement, on August 24, 2005, at approximately 10:00 a.m. Ontario Provincial Police Underwater Recovery Team searched a portion of the Detroit River, and recovered a Remington 870 shotgun in the Detroit River in the vicinity of the area COLEMAN was known to have discarded the weapon. The U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) conducted a trace of the firearm. The ATF trace revealed that the identified weapon was purchased by COLEMAN at WAL-MART Store # 2631, located at 13507 Middlebelt Rd., Livonia, Michigan on March 3, 2004. When recovered, the shotgun contained one spent shotgun shell casing inside the chamber / breech.

ICE agents, in cooperation with the Michigan State Police and Southfield Police Department, executed a search warrant at Coleman's residence in Southfield. This investigation is ongoing.

Coleman appeared this afternoon on the criminal complaint in U.S. District Court in Detroit before the Honorable Virginia M. Morgan. He was temporarily detained pending a detention hearing scheduled for Tuesday, September 6, 2005 at 1:00. The case is being prosecuted by

Assistant U.S. Attorney John Freeman from the U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of Michigan



U.S. Department of Justice

**Stephen J. Murphy
United States Attorney
Eastern District of Michigan**

*Suite 2001
211 West Fort Street
Detroit, Michigan 48226-3277
Fax: (313) 226-3561*

For Immediate Release:

Contact: Gina Balaya (313) 226-9758

September 1, 2005

**UNITED STATES ATTORNEY STEPHEN J. MURPHY
ANNOUNCES NEW INITIATIVE TO COMBAT
METHAMPHETAMINE IN COORDINATION WITH DEA - LED
“OPERATION WILDFIRE”**

United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy today announced new initiatives his office is putting in place to combat the production and distribution of methamphetamine in the Eastern District of Michigan. This initiative is being coordinated with DEA-led “Operation Wildfire”, the largest nationally coordinated law enforcement effort designed to target all levels of the methamphetamine manufacturing and distribution chain in the United States and continue to fight against the spread of methamphetamine. “Operation Wildfire” follows President George Bush’s national strategy to battle the meth drug plague as announced last week by Attorney General Alberto Gonzales in Nashville, Tennessee.

Methamphetamine (“Meth”) is a powerful central nervous system stimulant which can come in the form of powder, pills, base or as a high-potency re-crystallized powder. Meth can be inhaled, smoked, injected or swallowed, depending on the form. The effects from the use of meth can be devastating. Negative physical effects include increased heart rate, blood pressure, decreased appetite, sleep and lung function. Psychological effects includes confusion, lack of concentration, hallucinations, depression, anger and psychosis. Meth use can also cause intense itching that users liken to bugs crawling under their skin. Severe dental problem can also occur such as rotting of the gums and teeth. During the manufacturing

process, meth cooks face exposure to toxic fumes, asphyxiation and the possibility of serious injury or death due to fire or explosion. These dangers extend to those in close proximity who may not be involved in the process, such as children.

During the past four weeks, local agents of the Drug Enforcement Administration, along with the Michigan State Police, Jackson County Narcotics Enforcement Team, Kalamazoo Valley Enforcement Team, Southwest Enforcement Team and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives have executed various search warrants and arrests warrants in the Eastern District with notable efforts to get ahead of the methamphetamine curse and to send a message to manufacturers and dealers of the drug that federal law enforcement is serious about preventing an epidemic in the district where Murphy serves.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Under U.S. Attorney Murphy's plan, the United States Attorney's Office will place a high priority on the prosecution of methamphetamine cooks and repeat offenders, with special emphasis being given to the small toxic labs ("STLs") that crop up in rural areas of the district and upon which Congress has placed a high level of concern.

Earlier this month, for instance, a defendant was sentenced in the Eastern District of Michigan to serve 120 months in federal prison for his conviction on meth related charges. In United States v. Davis, evidence presented at trial showed that Davis, a nomadic meth "cook" from Arizona set up three separate clandestine meth labs in the State of Michigan, including one that exploded and burned in 2001. This lab, which could be fairly construed as a STL was located in Cadillac, Michigan and its explosion burned and severely injured a co-conspirator named David Bowen. The evidence also demonstrated that Davis traveled all over Michigan and Ohio to purchase thousands of cold and allergy tablets containing pseudoephedrine, a key ingredient to manufacture meth.

There are currently three other defendants under indictment for the possession of methamphetamine in this district, including the case of Demetrius Meffer and Michael Mastromatteo who are currently charged, among other things, with endangering human life

while illegally manufacturing meth. Other investigations continue to date.

U.S. Attorney Murphy has assigned an attorney in the office's Controlled Substances Unit to serve as the district's Meth Coordinator. This attorney will be assigned the task of identifying major organizations responsible for illegal trafficking of methamphetamine and its precursor chemical as priority targets. This attorney will be trained in all aspects of information related to the drug's manufacture and pernicious effect and will be further responsible for stamping out the particular menace of STLs.

TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Training is a key component to the U.S. Attorney's strategy. Due to the hazardous chemicals involved in producing meth, law enforcement officials must be trained properly to ensure effective and safe outcomes when dismantling a meth lab. In September, 2005, the United States Attorney's Office along with other state and federal agencies including the Michigan Department of Community Health, Office of Drug Control Policy, the Middle Atlantic-Great Lakes Organized Crime Law Enforcement Network and Southeast Michigan HIDTA will be co-hosting a Methamphetamine Investigation Management training program. The program will focus on the meth problem, the process of manufacturing meth, first response and lab scene procedures, clandestine laboratories, STLs, mandated regulations, investigative techniques, raid issues, and drug-endangered children. This training is designed for state and local law enforcement officers.

RESPONSE TO THIS DRUG'S UNIQUE CONSEQUENCES ON CHILDREN

Children who live at or visit meth labs or who are present during the drug's production face specific dangers which include inhalation, absorption or ingestion of toxic chemicals, drugs, or contaminated foods or drink that may result in respiratory difficulties, nausea, chest pain, eye and tissue irritation, chemical burns and death. Fires or explosion can result from dangerous methamphetamine production. In addition, children of meth users are often times subject to abuse and neglect by the using parents who often binge on meth along with having to live in hazardous conditions.

Part of U.S. Attorney Murphy's meth initiative involves implementing the Drug Endangered Children program (DEC) in the Eastern District. DEC programs aim to help children who suffer physical or psychological harm and neglect resulting from presence at or near site of drug production. A nationwide effort to support these programs was launched during President Bush's first term.

Later this year the U.S. Attorney's Office will be conducting an intra-district training program for Assistant United States Attorneys, federal agents, state stakeholders such as county prosecutors and sheriffs on meth and its effect on children. The Office will place training emphasis on how to look for endangerment of children when investigating and prosecuting cases with an eye toward sentencing enhancement and statistical tracking of same. In addition, the United States Attorney's Offices for the both the Eastern and Western Districts plan on hosting the National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children here in Detroit next spring for a two day statewide conference/training to further educate our office, federal agencies and state child protection agency employees on the entire initiative regarding getting children out of situations where they are effected and/or damaged by drug activity.

United States Attorney Murphy will be available for interviews beginning September 2, 2005.



U.S. Department of Justice

**Stephen J. Murphy
United States Attorney
Eastern District of Michigan**

*Suite 2001
211 West Fort Street
Detroit, Michigan 48226-3277
Fax: (313) 226-3561*

For Immediate Release:

Contact: Gina Balaya (313) 226-9758
Dawn Clenney - FBI (313) 237-4206

August 29, 2005

EVENT: Complaint

Defendant: Kimberly Murray, et al

**TWO FORMER STATE WORKERS AND ANOTHER INDIVIDUAL
CHARGED WITH IDENTITY DOCUMENT FRAUD MCA SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT
PLEADS GUILTY**

Two former employees of the Michigan Secretary of State's office and another individual have been charged in criminal complaints with issuing fraudulent driver's licenses and identification documents announced United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy. U.S. Attorney Murphy was joined in the announcement by Special Agent in Charge Daniel D. Roberts, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Special Agent in Charge Brian Moskowitz, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Special Agent in Charge Michelle McVicker, Department of Transportation Office of Inspector General (DOT-OIG), Terri Lynn Land, Michigan Secretary of State, and the Michigan State Police.

Charged are REGJEAN WELCH (formerly Regjean Harris), age 26, of Detroit, Michigan, KIMBERLY MURRAY, age 31, of Detroit, Michigan, and ANDRE DONALDSON, age 34 of Detroit, Michigan. The arrests of WELCH, MURRAY and DONALDSON are part of a nationwide initiative aimed at cracking down on corruption relating to the issuance of identification documents.

The affidavit in support of the complaint alleges that WELCH, who was employed at the Newburgh Road, Livonia branch of the Secretary of State, and MURRAY, who was employed at the Washington Boulevard, Detroit branch of the Secretary of State, issued operator's licenses and personal identification cards to individuals in alias names, for a fee ranging from three hundred to eleven hundred dollars. The individuals were directed to the branch offices of WELCH or MURRAY and would approach their counters at which time WELCH or MURRAY would process the requests for alias identification documents without requiring the individuals to produce valid proof of their identities. Once the applications were completed, the fraudulent identification documents would be sent, through the mail, to the individuals. DONALDSON is alleged to have referred at least four or five people to WELCH for the purpose of assisting these individuals with obtaining fraudulent identification documents.

Normally, an applicant for a Michigan operator's license or personal identification card must prove his or her identity and residence by presenting certain specified documents to a Secretary of State clerk, such as the applicant's birth certificate, passport or utility bills. To obtain an operator's license, the applicant must also pass knowledge and road skills test, complete practice on a temporary instruction permit and pay a \$25 fee.

As stated in the affidavits in support of the complaints, some of the individuals who received identification documents in alias names did so because of poor driving records, bad credit, or pending criminal charges.

"The United States Attorney's Office appreciates the efforts of the Secretary of State, FBI, ICE, DOT-OIG, and the Michigan State Police in attacking this significant problem", stated United States Attorney Murphy. "The task force will continue to investigate these matters and will take vigorous enforcement action if and when it identifies employees and others involved in such misconduct.

"There's no place in this department for those who abuse the public's trust," Secretary Land said. "We will continue working with law enforcement, as well as conducting our own internal investigations, to ensure that those who violate that confidence are dealt with appropriately. We have reviewed our department procedures and will refine them to help

prevent similar incidents. Fortunately, these allegations do not reflect the dedication and professionalism of the vast majority of our employees."

A conviction of this offense carries a maximum penalty of 15 years in prison or a \$250,000 fine, or both. Any sentence will ultimately be imposed by the court with advisory guidance from the United States Sentence Guidelines, according to the nature of the offense and the criminal background, if any, of the defendant.

All three defendants appeared in federal court this afternoon and were released on unsecured bonds. Their next court appearance is a preliminary examination set for September 19, 2005.

A complaint is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. Trial cannot be held on felony charges in a complaint. When the investigation is completed a determination will be made whether to seek a felony indictment. This case is being investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Department of Transportation, Office of Inspector General, the Michigan Secretary of State, Office of Investigation, and the Michigan State Police.



U.S. Department of Justice

**Stephen J. Murphy
United States Attorney
Eastern District of Michigan**

*Suite 2001
211 West Fort Street
Detroit, Michigan 48226-3277
Fax: (313) 226-3561*

For Immediate Release:

Contact: Gina Balaya (313) 226-9758

August 31, 2005

EVENT: Sentencing

Defendant: Mayce Edward Christopher Webber III (a/k/aChris Webber)

CHRIS WEBBER SENTENCED TODAY

Mayce Edward Christopher Webber III (a/k/a Chris Webber), was sentenced on his July 14, 2003 plea of guilty to Criminal Contempt in violation of 18 U.S.C. §401, announced United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy. Webber pleaded guilty to committing criminal contempt by obstructing the administration of justice by testifying falsely before a Federal grand jury on August 2, 2000. Webber admitted during his plea that he had testified falsely to the federal grand jury when he denied giving money to Eddie L. Martin when in truth, he had delivered to Martin more than \$38,000.00.

Today the Honorable Nancy G. Edmunds, citing to Mr. Webber's 330 hours of community service, his out of pocket expenses in excess of \$78,000.00 and participating in the program for the improvement in reading skills for students, elected to treat his offense as a misdemeanor. The Judge also imposed the maximum fine for a misdemeanor of \$100,000.00.



U.S. Department of Justice

**Stephen J. Murphy
United States Attorney
Eastern District of Michigan**

*Suite 2001
211 West Fort Street
Detroit, Michigan 48226-3277
Fax: (313) 226-3561*

For Immediate Release:

Contact: Gina Balaya (313) 226-9758

September 21, 2005

EVENT: Guilty Plea

Defendant: James Roy Sylvester

SAGINAW AREA MAN CONVICTED ON DRUG CHARGES

United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy announced that a jury that had deliberated approximately four hours returned guilty verdicts Wednesday, September 21, 2005, against James Roy Sylvester, Jr., 46, a Saginaw area resident, for various violations of federal drug and firearms laws. The 7-day trial was conducted before United States District Judge David M. Lawson in Bay City, Michigan.

Sylvester was found guilty of possessing 5 kilograms of cocaine, over 20 grams of crack cocaine, as well as OxyContin, Valium, Vicodin and codeine pills, all with the intent to distribute those drugs. According to the evidence, Sylvester traveled and caused others to travel to California in connection with his drug business. Sylvester also possessed firearms in connection with his drug offenses, and conspired with others to traffic in 5 kilograms or more of cocaine. The jury also found that Sylvester, a convicted felon, possessed firearms in violation of federal law.

Mr. Murphy stated, "This case is an excellent example of local, state and federal law enforcement agencies joining forces against armed drug traffickers. I commend the efforts all of the officers and agents who worked on this investigation."

The case was investigated by state and federal law enforcement agencies in Michigan, Nebraska and California, including Drug Enforcement Agency agents and task force officers in

all three states, officers employed by the Saginaw County Sheriff's Department, the Saginaw City Police Department, the Michigan State Police, the Bay City Police Department, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, the Nebraska State Patrol, the Michigan State Police Forensic Laboratory and the DEA Laboratory in Chicago. Special assistance in the prosecution of the case was provided by the U.S. Marshal Service. The Saginaw DEA office coordinated the joint investigation of this case.

Sentencing of Mr. Sylvester was scheduled by Judge David M. Lawson for December 22, 2005 at 2:30 p.m. The sentence will be based on the nature of the offenses and the criminal background of the defendant.