

To: Interested Media
From: Bud Cummins, United States Attorney
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LITTLE ROCK, AR– Bud Cummins, U. S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas, announced the indictment of Hasan Ali Ayesh and William Miller by a federal grand jury in Little Rock. Ayesh was charged with 650 counts of structuring currency transactions to avoid federal reporting requirements. Miller was charged with aiding and assisting Ayesh in his structuring activities. Both men were charged with one count of wire fraud.

According to the indictment, from March 15, 1999 to May 27, 2003, Ayesh and Miller devised a scheme to defraud the United States by impeding or impairing the Department of Treasury’s ability to obtain data and reports of currency transactions in excess of \$10,000. “Financial institutions that engage in currency transactions in excess of \$10,000 with a customer are required to report the transaction to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). These regulations also require that multiple transactions be treated as a single transaction if they are by, or on behalf of, the same person and they total more than \$10,000 during any one business day,” stated Assistant U.S. Attorney Joe Volpe, the prosecutor assigned to the case.

The indictment states that Ayesh operated a convenience store and gas station known as The Fast Market in West Memphis, Arkansas. Ayesh deposited numerous two party checks each day into his business bank account. The indictment charges that between March 15, 1999 and May 27, 2003, Ayesh made 650 structured withdrawals from this account mostly by writing checks payable to Cash or Fast Market in the amount

of \$9,900 and cashing these checks at the bank. These structured withdrawals totaled \$6,435,000 in cash withdrawn from his Union Planters Bank account. According to the indictment, Ayesh did this because he did not want the IRS to know he was moving such large amounts of cash out of his business because it would affect his ability to receive financial aide from the State of Tennessee as well as allow him to avoid paying taxes on his income. Additionally, the indictment charges that Ayesh was sending some of this money overseas to family members living in Palestinian controlled territories.

Miller acted as the accountant for Ayesh and The Fast Market and had access to all of Ayesh's financial records which he regularly reviewed, according to the indictment. The indictment states that Miller prepared a 2002 individual tax return for Ayesh that was filed with the IRS indicating income of \$15,600, making Ayesh eligible to receive Earned Income Credit. Around the same time period, Miller and Ayesh made a fraudulent application for \$200,000 mortgage loan to Crump Mortgage in Memphis, Tennessee. With this loan application, Miller prepared a "dummy" individual tax return indicating Ayesh had earned an annual income of \$71,220. This application and supporting information was faxed to the mortgage company.

The indictment also seeks the forfeiture of al U.S. Currency recovered on or about August 15, 2003, from Ayesh's residence and business and currency in his Union Planters Bank account, totaling approximately \$89,808.86.

This investigation was conducted by the Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) to include the FBI, IRS Criminal Investigation, the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Arkansas State Police and the West Memphis Police Department.

An indictment is a mere allegation of wrongdoing. Any defendant is presumed innocent until they are convicted in a court of competent jurisdiction.

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