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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Norfolk, Virginia – Paul J. McNulty, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, announced that Gregory Lawrence Tropea, age 40, of Hampton, Virginia, was sentenced today in U.S. District Court in Norfolk, by the Honorable Jerome B. Friedman, United States District Judge, to 125 months in prison, forfeiture of \$108,000.00 in cash, a computer, Canadian coins, and restitution in the amount of \$195,019.70. He was previously convicted of conspiracy to commit structuring offenses against the United States, conspiracy to file false tax returns, and possession of child pornography.

This investigation began when the Internal Revenue Service/Criminal Investigation received a call from the Colorado Police Department informing them that they had arrested Tropea and co-defendant Alice Lorraine Askew for theft. At the time of the arrest, they had cash, two-way radios and records reflecting \$3 million in stock transactions in their possession.

Further investigation revealed that for over three years, Tropea and Askew traveled the United States and burglarized small businesses, stealing cash from their in-store safes. Askew's role was to distract the owners or employees while Tropea took the money. They then either deposited the cash directly into their own accounts, or purchased cashier's checks or money orders made payable in their names and deposited them. The deposits, which exceed over \$500,000 in cash, were in amounts of less than \$10,000 in order to conceal income from the IRS and other law enforcement authorities. The total amount in cashier's checks and/or money orders purchased was approximately \$290,000 and the total unreported income to IRS is over \$642,000.00

The tax and structuring charges were investigated by Internal Revenue Service/Criminal Investigation. The possession of child pornography charge was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Virginia State Police. Assistant United States Attorney Robert J. Seidel, Jr. prosecuted the case, with assistance from Krista Tongring, with the Tax Division, Department of Justice.