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**TWO BROTHERS GET JAIL TIME IN FEDERAL PRISON ON
CHARGES OF CONSPIRACY, WIRE FRAUD
AND FOOD STAMP FRAUD**

Amount of Money Embezzled Totaled \$1,784,135.51

Lake Charles, La.: United States Attorney Stephanie A. Finley announced today that two brothers from Lake Charles, La. were sentenced on charges of conspiracy, wire fraud and food stamp fraud following an investigation involving Goodfellas Grocery in Lake Charles. U.S. District Judge Patricia Minaldi sentenced Craig Michael Nash, 39, to 60 months in prison for one count of Conspiracy to Commit Fraud and 78 months in prison for one count of Wire Fraud, to run concurrent. Because the Judge ordered the sentences to run concurrently, Craig Nash will serve six and a half years in federal prison, followed by three years of supervised release. The Judge also ordered Craig Nash to pay \$1,784,135.51 in restitution to the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Program. His brother, Hillary Nash, III, 40, who played a lesser role in the fraud, was sentenced to six months in prison and three years of supervised release. Hillary Nash was order to pay \$62,515.86 in restitution. Craig Nash's sister, Rosalyn Hilliard, 29, also of Lake Charles, was previously sentenced on July 19, 2012, to three years probation for Food Stamp Fraud and was ordered to pay \$2,862.34 in restitution. Hilliard was determined to have played a minor role in the fraud.

All of the defendants' charges involved the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The program is the nation's principal food assistance program which enables low-income households to buy food by issuing monthly benefits in the form of an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card redeemable for food at USDA authorized retail stores. On January 28, 2004, Food and Nutrition Services authorized Craig Nash and Goodfellas Tobacco to accept EBT food stamps after he applied to be an authorized retailer to accept food stamp benefits.

After the store began participating in the program, investigators with the USDA-OIG learned of suspicious activity relating to the trafficking of SNAP benefits. The agency opened an investigation on Goodfellas Grocery (formerly Goodfellas Tobacco) in 2009. Agents from USDA-OIG and Alcohol Tobacco Control (ATC), as well as cooperating witnesses, made multiple visits to Goodfellas Grocery and exchanged SNAP benefits for cash, beer, liquor and cigarettes. Craig Nash continued to own and operate Goodfellas Grocery during this time, and his sister, Rosalyn Hilliard, and brother Hillary Nash, assisted Craig Nash at the check-out counter for two locations, Goodfellas and Goodfellas II. Craig Nash knew his siblings were exchanging food stamps for cash and ineligible items, and he was present during undercover transactions. During the undercover transactions, Goodfellas purchased food stamp benefits and provided cash to recipients at a discounted value. After the transaction, the full amount of benefits were redeemed by Goodfellas from the Food Stamp Program and then deposited into a bank account in the name of Craig Nash and Goodfellas. Goodfellas paid cash for SNAP benefits at the rate of .50 cents on the dollar; therefore, Goodfellas profited by keeping 50% of the benefits. This trafficking caused multiple fraudulent wire transfers of funds into Craig Nash's bank account.

According to government databases reviewed by law enforcement, from January 1, 2007, through January of 2011, Goodfellas Grocery completed or caused about 2,066 SNAP redemption transactions totaling \$2,917,587.84 to be deposited into Goodfellas' bank account. The majority of the 2,066 EBT redemptions were fraudulent. A review of the bank records, vendor invoicing and financial documents reveal that from January 2007 through November 2010, Goodfellas' expenditures for eligible food items were approximately \$153,779.89. Based on a review and analysis of Goodfellas Grocery transactions, the amount of fraudulent funds received by Goodfellas Grocery and Craig Nash through food stamp trafficking totaled at least \$1,784,135.51, and the Court ordered this amount to be paid in restitution. The investigation further revealed that the store carried very few groceries despite the fact that they were the 9th largest acceptor of food stamp benefits in the area.

The majority of the money that moved through Craig Nash's bank account were checks made payable to "cash," as well as other expenses and transactions. The Government seized all of the cash remaining in Nash's account along with several vehicles and real property that were purchased with proceeds from the fraudulent scheme. Those items included:

One (1) 2000 Ferrari 360 Modena, silver in color, VIN: ZFFU51A0Y0122320;

One (1) 2005 BMW, tan in color, convertible two-door, VIN: WBAEK73435B328576;

One (1) 2002 Mercedes Benz S430, silver in color, four-door, VIN: WDBNG70J22A227009;

One (1) 1999 Porsche 911 Carrera, silver in color, convertible, VIN: WP0CA2991XS655449; and

Five pieces of commercial property, with land and structures, including the Goodfellas store locations.

United States Attorney Stephanie Finley stated, "My office will continue to prosecute these cases. The sentences handed down today should send a message that we do not take food stamp fraud lightly. It is a clear abuse of taxpayer money and a fraudulent scheme executed to profit off the backs of lower-income families. Our food stamp program serves a noble purpose of providing nutritious food to families and children in need, and anyone who does not follow federal law or intends to illegally profit off this program will be prosecuted. Our prosecutions have and, in the future, will include retailers, as well as recipients who sell their food stamps for cash, alcohol, tobacco or other ineligible items."

The case was investigated by Special Agent Tanya Moses with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Louisiana Office of Alcohol and Tobacco Control, and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Myers P. Namie.

If you suspect anyone of food stamp fraud, please contact the USDA-OIG at 1-800-424-9121.

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