



# Department of Justice

Acting United States Attorney Lawrence G. Brown  
Eastern District of California

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## **FOUR CHARGED IN BIZARRE SHAKE DOWN CONNECTED TO \$40 MILLION PONZI SCHEME**

SACRAMENTO, Calif.—Acting United States Attorney Lawrence G. Brown, FBI Special Agent-in-Charge Drew Parenti, and IRS-Criminal Investigation Special-Agent-in-Charge Scott O'Briant announced that MICHAEL DAVID SANDERS, aka David Dennis SANDERS, 41, of Fair Oaks, Calif.; CRAIG ANDERSON, 39, of Chicago; CASSANDRA MOORE, 26, of Beverly Hills, Calif.; and SEAN SMARTT, 41, of Sacramento, have been indicted in a conspiracy to impersonate an officer and employee of the United States.

This case is the product of a joint investigation by the FBI and the IRS-Criminal Investigation.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Robin R. Taylor, who is prosecuting the case, the defendants were attempting to recover funds for investors who lost money in a Ponzi investment fraud scheme carried out by ANTHONY VASSALLO, who was charged with mail fraud, wire fraud, and money laundering offenses on April 15, 2009. VASSALLO's firm, Equity Investment Management and Trading Inc. (EIMT"), lost virtually all of the investors' money, and ceased trading in securities in about September 2007.

In what is alleged to be an attempt to recoup investor money, on or about March 8, 2009, SANDERS, ANDERSON, MOORE and SMARTT entered an office suite in Folsom, Calif. where a prearranged meeting was taking place with three hedge fund operators and two others. Several of the defendants wore bullet proof vests, ear pieces, hand cuffs, and badges. More than one of the defendants was carrying a radio and a gun. As they entered, SANDERS and ANDERSON announced loudly to the hedge fund operators that the defendants were with the FBI and the United States Security and Exchange Commission. ANDERSON stated that MOORE was on the "federal level," and it was up to her if charges would be filed in an ongoing investment fraud investigation of EIMT.

SANDERS and ANDERSON paced around the office, exposed their weapons, and blocked the entrances and exits of the office suite. One of the co-conspirators told the hedge fund operators that the defendants were there to collect funds taken from the EIMT account for victims of a fraud. ANDERSON told the hedge fund operators that they had until noon on Monday, March 9, 2009, to wire \$378,300.16 to a Patelco Credit Union bank account in the name of the "Spirit Foundation" and to send an e-mail confirmation an email address they provided. The defendants left a sheet of paper with the wiring instructions, routing number, account number, bank name, amount, and an email address.

SMARTT appeared today in court before United States Magistrate Judge Gregory G.

Hollows and was released on bond. SANDERS, who was previously released on bond, has his next court appearance on June 5, 2009. Court dates for ANDERSON and MOORE have not yet been set.

The defendants face up to five years in prison for the conspiracy charge. However, the actual sentence will be dictated by the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of factors, and will be imposed at the discretion of the court. The charges in the criminal complaints are only allegations and the defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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