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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

MAN SENTENCED FOR HIS PART IN A COUNTERFEIT SCHEME THAT STARTED IN COLOMBIA

PRESS RELEASE

Susan W. Brooks, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Indiana, announced that MAURICIO ARIAS, 27, of Owensboro, Kentucky, was sentenced to 15 months imprisonment by U.S. District Judge Richard L. Young following his guilty plea to dealing in counterfeit securities. This case was the result of an investigation by the United States Secret Service.

ARIAS plead guilty to the offense on October 7, 2005. According to facts presented in court at the time of the guilty plea, ARIAS is a citizen of the country of Colombia classified as a lawful permanent resident in the United States. On a trip to Colombia he made in September of 2004, ARIAS admitted that he arranged for the shipment of counterfeit one-hundred dollar bills to the United States. ARIAS received a package from Colombia containing approximately

$8,000 in counterfeit one-hundred dollar bills between December 24, 2004 and January 24, 2005. ARIAS and an accomplice who plead guilty in a separate case then proceeded to purchase money orders with the counterfeit one-hundred dollar bills from businesses in the Evansville, Indiana, area. ARIAS deposited the money orders into a bank account and used the money to pay his personal expenses.

The counterfeit one-hundred dollar bills were described by a secret service agent who testified in the change of plea hearing as high quality counterfeit notes that would not be easily detected by a merchant. The agent also testified that the notes matched a series of counterfeit one-hundred bills that have been recovered throughout the United States by the Secret Service and have been linked to Colombia.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Todd S. Shellenbarger, who prosecuted the case for the government, Judge Young also imposed 2 years supervised release following ARIAS' release from imprisonment. During the period of supervised release, ARIAS must make restitution payments. ARIAS was ordered to make restitution in the amount of $7,926.

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