U.S. Department of Justice

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For Immediate Release:
Contact: Gina Balaya (313) 226-9758

May 3, 2005

EVENT: SENTENCING

DEFENDANT: Edna E. Paczas, 60, of South Carolina

FORMER EMPLOYEE OF A STERLING HEIGHTS COMPANY SENTENCED

United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy announced that a former Pleasant Ridge resident was sentenced yesterday in federal court in Detroit to 37 months on a conviction of mail fraud. Receiving the sentence from Chief United States District Judge Bernard A. Friedman was Edna Elaine Paczas, age 60, who currently resides in South Carolina.

Mr. Murphy stated that Ms. Paczas was charged with using a private interstate carrier to facilitate a fraud scheme in which, over a period of at least five years, she stole $2,200,000 from her employer, Tarus Products, Inc. of Sterling Heights. Specifically, Ms. Paczas, exploiting her position as Tarus' controller, diverted corporate funds to acquire artwork, pay her personal credit card debt, purchase real estate, and otherwise utilize corporate funds for her own purposes. As one illustration of her fraud scheme, Paczas bought a $38,500 Marc Chagall artwork by utilizing a private interstate carrier to transmit corporate funds to an art

dealer in San Francisco.

Prior to imposing sentence, Judge Friedman declined to find that Paczas' actions were excused by her attorney's representations that Paczas was afflicted by a bi-polar and other mental disorders.

Mr. Murphy commended the United States Postal Service for its investigation of this case which led to the successful prosecution of Ms. Paczas.

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May 18, 2005

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FORMER MAINTENANCE DIRECTOR OF EAST DETROIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS SENTENCED TO 12 MONTHS IN PRISON

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy; Daniel D. Roberts, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation; and Maurice M. Aouate, Special Agent in Charge, Internal Revenue Service announced that Frank Brasza, age 63, a resident of Rochester Hills, Michigan, was sentenced today by United States District Court Judge Patrick J. Duggan to 12 months and one day imprisonment. Mr. Brasza had previously pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit racketeering between 1990 and 2002 in Macomb County. In addition, upon court order, Mr. Brasza paid $225,000 in restitution to the East Detroit Public Schools at the time of sentencing.

Assistant United States Attorney John Engstrom, who prosecuted the case, stated that "as the Director of Maintenance at East Detroit Public Schools during the course of the racketeering conspiracy, Mr. Brasza's participation was necessary and integral to the success of the conspiracy. Mr. Brasza approved invoices which overbilled the district in excess of $1,500,00.00, at or about the same time as he received free services from many of the vendors submitting false and excessive invoices. Ultimately, Mr. Brasza cooperated in the

investigation and testified against some of his coconspirators and the abbreviated length of his sentence reflects the level of his cooperation."

Mr. Murphy commended the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Internal Revenue Service for its investigation of this case which led to the successful prosecution of Mr. Brasza.

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May 17, 2005

EVENT: SENTENCING

DEFENDANT: Frank Brasza

FORMER MAINTENANCE DIRECTOR OF
EAST DETROIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS SENTENCED
TO 12 MONTHS IN PRISON

United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy; Daniel D. Roberts, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation; and Maurice M. Aouate, Special Agent in Charge, Internal Revenue Service announced that Frank Brasza, age 63, a resident of Rochester Hills, Michigan, was sentenced today by United States District Court Judge Patrick J. Duggan to 12 months and one day imprisonment. Mr. Brasza had previously pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit racketeering between 1990 and 2002 in Macomb County. In addition, upon court order, Mr. Brasza paid $225,000 in restitution to the East Detroit Public Schools at the time of sentencing.

Assistant United States Attorney John Engstrom, who prosecuted the case, stated that

"as the Director of Maintenance at East Detroit Public Schools during the course of the racketeering conspiracy, Mr. Brasza's participation was necessary and integral to the success of the conspiracy. Mr. Brasza approved invoices which overbilled the district in excess of $1,500,00.00, at or about the same time as he received free services from many of the vendors submitting false and excessive invoices. Ultimately, Mr. Brasza cooperated in the investigation and testified against some of his coconspirators and the abbreviated length of his sentence reflects the level of his cooperation."

Mr. Murphy commended the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Internal Revenue Service for its investigation of this case which led to the successful prosecution of Mr. Brasza.

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Vera Fedorak - ATF (313) 259-7917

May 16, 2005

EVENT: SENTENCING

DEFENDANT: Carl Alonzo Marshall

A 27 year-old Detroit man was sentenced to 100 months in prison after pleading guilty to federal firearm charges, United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy and Special Agent in Charge Valerie J. Goddard, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) announced today.

Carl Alonzo Marshall was sentenced on May 13, 2005, by U.S. District Judge Paul D. Borman in federal court in Detroit.

This case is one of the more than 300 that have been referred to the U.S. Attorney's Office for prosecution under a Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative that provides for the referral of gun cases by local prosecutors in those instances in which federal law provides for a substantially higher sentence.

On January 26, 2004, Marshall was arrested following the execution of a search warrant by the Detroit Police Department at a residence in Detroit were suspected drug activity was

occurring. Prior to executing the warrant Detroit Police Officers on surveillance observed Marshall obtain suspected narcotics from a van parked in front of the location. The van was searched for narcotics
Recovered from inside the van was 8.8 grams of marijuana and five firearms, two of which were loaded.
Marshall was on state probation at the time of his arrest.

“This case is proof once again that Project Safe Neighborhoods is making a difference in our communities” Murphy said. “My office will continue to aggressively seek higher sentences for gun offenders.”

ATF SAC Goddard stated, “The conviction and lengthy sentence in this case highlights the significance Project Safe Neighborhoods plays in our fight to keep guns and violent offenders off the street."

U.S. Attorney Murphy commended the efforts of agents of ATF, officers of the Detroit Police Department and Assistant U.S. Attorney Susan Gillooly for their diligent work on this case.

For questions regarding the Project Safe Neighborhoods in the Eastern District of Michigan please contact Peggy Goodwin, The Goodwin Co. at 248-543-3891.

U.S. Department of Justice

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May 16, 2005

EVENT: Conviction

DEFENDANT: April J. Jones

Detroit Preparer's Skills to Deceive Lands Her a Conviction for Preparing False Returns

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United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy and Maurice M. Aouate, Special Agent in Charge, Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation announced that on May 13, 2005, April Jones, 35, of Detroit, Michigan, was convicted by a jury in federal court on 31 counts of aiding and assisting in the preparation of false Federal income tax returns.

The verdict was delivered after the jury deliberated for an hour, concluding a five day trial before United States District Judge Robert H. Cleland. Evidence presented at trial showed that during 1999 through 2002, Ms. Jones gained larger refunds and minimized tax liabilities through her budding tax service for co-workers at a local auto plant and their referrals. She did this by adding fictitious job search deductions, gifts to charity, and un-reimbursed employee expenses, causing the Internal Revenue Service to suffer a tax loss of over $70,000. In most cases, Ms. Jones failed to sign the returns as the preparer even though she was collecting a fee.

Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation became aware of Ms. Jones' activities

during their investigation of Maquilla Yvonne Squire, 43, of Detroit, Michigan, another local auto plant employee. During questioning, many of the taxpayers who utilized Ms. Squires' services, identified Ms. Jones as the return preparer on their subsequent tax returns. On May 11, 2004, Ms. Squire was sentenced to 27 months imprisonment as the result of pleading guilty to two counts of aiding and assisting in the preparation of false and fraudulent tax returns, after creating over $730,000 in false deductions.

Mr. Aouate stated, "abusive return preparers try and convince taxpayers that they have developed the necessary knowledge and skills to deceive the Internal Revenue Service, which is usually far from the truth."

Ms. Jones' sentencing date is scheduled for August 16, 2005 at 2:00 pm.

Mr. Murphy commended the special agents of the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation. Assistant United States Attorney Dawn N. Ison prosecuted the case.

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May 16, 2005

EVENT: SENTENCING

DEFENDANT: Vincent Thompson

A 35 year-old Detroit man was sentenced to 420 months in prison after being found guilty of federal firearm and narcotics charges, United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy and Special Agent in Charge Valerie J. Goddard, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) announced today.

Vincent Thompson was sentenced on May 16, 2005, by U.S. District Judge Victoria A. Roberts in federal court in Detroit.

This case is one of the more than 300 that have been referred to the U.S. Attorney's Office for prosecution under a Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative that provides for the referral of gun cases by local prosecutors in those instances in which federal law provides for a substantially higher sentence.

On July 1, 2002, Thompson was arrested following the execution of a search warrant by the Detroit Police Department at a residence in Detroit were suspected drug activity was occurring. Two days before the warrant was executed, Detroit Police Officers made a controlled purchase of narcotics from the location. The house was searched for narcotics. Recovered from

inside the house was 11.34 grams of cocaine base (also known as crack cocaine), 33.28 grams of marijuana and a loaded .357 handgun.
Thompson was on lifetime state probation at the time of his arrest.

“This case is proof once again that Project Safe Neighborhoods is making a difference in our communities” Murphy said. “My office will continue to aggressively seek higher sentences for gun offenders.”

ATF SAC Goddard stated, “The conviction and lengthy sentence in this case highlights the significance Project Safe Neighborhoods plays in our fight to keep guns and violent offenders off the street."

U.S. Attorney Murphy commended the efforts of agents of ATF, officers of the Detroit Police Department and Assistant U.S. Attorney Jeanine Jones for their diligent work on this case.

For questions regarding the Project Safe Neighborhoods in the Eastern District of Michigan please contact Peggy Goodwin, The Goodwin Co. at 248-543-3891.

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May 18, 2005

EVENT: SENTENCING

DEFENDANT: John Earl Cole, Sr. age 53, former Detroit Police Department civilian employee

FORMER DETROIT POLICE DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEE SENTENCED

John Earl Cole, Sr., a former Detroit Police Department civilian employee, was sentenced today to 180 months imprisonment by United States District Judge John Corbett O'Meara. Cole pleaded guilty in August 2004 to one count of Conspiracy to Distribute Five or More Kilograms of Cocaine, and one count of Conspiracy to Commit Money Laundering. The offenses arose from Cole's involvement in the theft and embezzlement of at least 101 kilograms of cocaine from the Detroit Police Department Evidence room from approximately 1994 through 2000.

At the time of his plea, Defendant Cole admitted to the Court that he was a civilian delivery driver, who worked in the Evidence Room. Cole also admitted that he had stolen

approximately 100 kilograms of cocaine which had been seized by Detroit Police Officers and stored in the evidence room. On one occasion, Cole replaced the cocaine with unopened bags of Gold Medal Flour. Cole used the proceeds of his drug-trafficking to purchase numerous houses and other buildings in the City of Detroit, with the ownership disguised by placing title in the names of various relatives and associates.

Defendant Cole also testified at the trial of Donald C. Hynes, a police officer who retired in 2001. Prior to his retirement, Donald Hynes worked in the Evidence Room with Cole. In a trial which concluded March 28, 2005, Hynes was convicted of the same drug offenses as Defendant Cole, as well as embezzlement from the Detroit Police Department, Money Laundering Conspiracy, and False Declarations Before a Grand Jury. He faces a July 19, 2005, sentencing date. At trial, the government was able to establish that Defendant Hynes had access to the computer password of a Narcotics Division Lieutenant, which he used to change computer records of some cocaine stored in the Evidence Room, marking it as “to be destroyed,” and lifting holds on it.

Following an investigation by the Detroit Police Department, Internal Affairs Division, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation Division, an indictment charging nine people was returned in October 2002. Other than Defendants Hynes and Cole, and a Michigan State Police officer against whom charges later were dismissed, all of the other defendants were relatives or associates of Defendant John Cole, who assisted him in laundering proceeds of the crime or who lied to investigators. All of the other defendants, except the one against whom charges were dismissed, were convicted as well.

United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy stated that “This case demonstrates our commitment to rooting out all public corruption, including by law enforcement officers, root and branch. With our partners in the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Internal Revenue Service, and the Detroit Police Department, we will continue to aggressively pursue such cases.”

Daniel D. Roberts, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, said "This case represents a continuation of the FBI’s aggressive stance in pursuing public corruption matters as it is one of our top priorities. Additionally, we would like to thank the Detroit Police Department and the Internal Revenue Service for their professionalism and assistance during this investigation.”

Maurice Aouate, Special Agent in Charge, Internal Revenue Service Criminal

Investigation, said, "Even though the stolen cocaine was long gone, the financial trail remained, allowing investigators to link the illegal proceeds to the guilty parties."

Defendant Cole has been in custody continuously since his indictment in October 2002. Because parole has been abolished in the federal system, Cole cannot receive early release from his sentence. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Sarah Resnick Cohen and Jonathan Tukel.

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May 23, 2005

Event: Sentencing

Defendant: William Thomas, 37, of Detroit, Michigan

Jackson Hewitt Franchise Owner and his Manager
Sentenced for Conspiring to Defraud the IRS

United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy and Maurice M. Aouate, Special Agent in Charge, Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation announced that on May 23, 2005, Preston Harris, 33, of Detroit, Michigan, was sentenced to 18 months in prison followed by three years of supervised release. He was also ordered to pay restitution in the amount of $231,053. Previously, on May 6, 2005, William Thomas, 37 of Detroit and co-owner of several Jackson Hewitt franchises was sentenced to 30 months imprisonment, followed by three years supervised release. He was also ordered to pay $229,805 in restitution.

On July 26, 2004, Thomas and Harris were convicted by a jury of one count of conspiracy to defraud the Internal Revenue Service by means of fraudulent claims and two counts of filing false claims for refunds. Their sentences were handed down by United States District Court Judge Avern Cohn.

According to court records, during 1999 and 2000, Thomas was a co-owner and general manager of three Jackson Hewitt franchises in Oak Park, Highland Park, and Detroit. Jackson Hewitt Tax Service is one of the largest tax preparation services in the United States, with most of the offices independently owned and operated. Harris was in a managerial position at these franchises. Thomas and Harris, along with others, prepared over 50 false tax returns containing false and fictitious information, enlarging income tax refunds due to his clients by over $115,000. At sentencing, Judge Cohn determined that the total tax loss was

approximately $229,000. The false information included claiming false charitable contributions and un-reimbursed employment related expense. Thomas and Harris also claimed fictitious dependants and head of household status, along with creating fictitious Schedule C business, in order to generate an Earned Income Credit. Thomas and Harris not only derived financial benefit from the fees charged to their clients for the preparation of the income tax returns, but they often charged their clients an additional fee, sometimes as much as $1,000, for their unlawful services, which they took from the proceeds of the clients' refund checks.

Mr. Aouate Stated, "While most return preparers provide excellent services to their clients, there are those who profit by taking certain advantages with a taxpayer's return, causing considerable financial and legal problems for all involved. It is so important that people choose their return preparer wisely and not get caught up in these false "easy money" schemes to cheat the Internal Revenue Service."

Mr. Murphy commended the special agents of the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation for their work in this investigation. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Richard L. Delonis and Jeffrey A. McLellan, a Trial Attorney with the Tax Division of the U.S. Department of Justice.

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May 26, 2005

EVENT: Guilty Verdict

Defendant: Gregory Charles Ivory, 21 of Detroit

DETROIT MAN FOUND GUILTY OF BEING A FELON IN POSSESSION OF A FIREARM

A 21 year old resident of Detroit, Michigan was found guilty yesterday, May 25, 2005, by a federal jury in Detroit on charges of being a felon in possession of a firearm, announced United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy.

Found guilty was Gregory Charles Ivory of Detroit.

The verdict was delivered after the jury had deliberated for approximately six hours, concluding a two day trial held before United States District Judge Victoria A. Roberts.

The evidence presented at the trial showed that on September 14, 2004, Ivory was in possession of a loaded, 12 gauge shotgun which had been shortened by cutting off the stock. Ivory possessed the weapon at a suspected drug house on Ward Street in Detroit. Officers from the Detroit Police Department's Narcotics Enforcement Units for the 6th, 7th and 13th precincts executed a search warrant at the residence at approximately 2:30 p.m. on September 14, 2004, and discovered Ivory, along with several others, in the home. Ivory was

seen standing at the kitchen sink. Officers discovered a torn baggie of cocaine in the sink and the shotgun leaning against the kitchen cupboards within arm's reach. The search warrant was executed as part of a Narcotics Division blitz in Detroit's 2nd precinct.

Sentencing of Mr. Ivory is scheduled for September 21, 2005, at 2:30 p.m. before Judge Roberts.

The case was investigated by officers of the Detroit Police Department and agents of the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

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May 26 2005

EVENT: Conviction

DEFENDANT: Jason Hawthorne

AFTER FOUR YEARS AS A FUGITIVE, DEFENDANT CONVICTED OF FELON IN POSSESSION OF A FIREARM

United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy announced today that Jason Hawthorne, a 27-year-old resident of Detroit, Michigan, was found guilty on Tuesday, May 24, 2005, by a federal jury in Detroit on charges of being a felon in possession of a firearm.

The verdict was announced after the jury deliberated for approximately 20 minutes, concluding a two-day trial held before United States District Court Judge Robert H. Cleland.

The evidence presented at the two day trial showed that on March 12, 2000, in the vicinity of Thatcher and Lauder in Detroit, police officers on routine patrol within Detroit's 8th Precinct, heard gunfire and shortly thereafter observed a vehicle the defendant was riding in traveling without headlights. The officers stopped the vehicle and observed the defendant make suspicious movements in the area of the front passenger's seat, where he was seated. The officers recovered a loaded and operable Smith & Wesson 9mm semi-automatic pistol with five live rounds in the magazine from under the front passenger's seat. Fully loaded, the magazine holds nine rounds.

From April 2000, to September 2004, the defendant was a fugitive who utilized a false identity to evade law enforcement. He was ultimately arrested after giving a false name to officers in the 12th Precinct on September 27, 2004. Subsequent investigation revealed the defendant's true identity and the federal arrest warrant.

"This case clearly demonstrates the outstanding cooperative relationship between the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, the Detroit Police Department, and the United States Attorney's Office. It also shows the commitment of federal and local authorities in vigorously prosecuting persons that illegally possess guns in the City of Detroit," stated United States Attorney Murphy. Murphy also noted that, " my office is firmly committed to working with federal, state, and local agencies to aggressively prosecute felons who continue to break the law with illegal guns."

United States Attorney Murphy also praised the work of investigators, officers, and special agents from the Detroit Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms for their diligence in investigating the initial incident and tracking down the defendant so he could be held accountable at trial. Assistant United States Attorney John Freeman prosecuted the case.

Sentencing of Mr. Hawthorne is scheduled for August 23, 2005.

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May 27, 2005

Event: Sentencing

Defendant: Seth David Spann, 21 of Detroit

Detroit Man sentenced to 137 Months federal firearm and drug charges

A 27 year-old Detroit man was sentenced to 137 months in prison after pleading guilty to federal firearm and drug charges, United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy and Special Agent in Charge Valerie J. Goddard, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) announced today.

Seth David Spann was sentenced on May 26, 2005, by U.S. District Judge Robert H. Cleland in federal court in Detroit.

This case is one of the more than 300 that have been referred to the U.S. Attorney's Office for prosecution under a Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative that provides for the referral of gun cases by local prosecutors in those instances in which federal law provides for a substantially higher sentence.

On May 7, 2004, SPANN was arrested by officers of the Detroit Police Department after they observed SPANN at a gas station. SPANN exited his vehicle and tossed an empty beer

bottle into the trash. SPANN appeared intoxicated and was uncooperative with the officers. Upon entering SPANN's vehicle, officers found additional open intoxicants along with a loaded Glock .40 caliber semi-automatic handgun on the floor of the vehicle, twenty-seven (27) rocks of crack cocaine and small bag of marijuana in the console.

SPANN has a prior criminal history dating back to age 18. His prior convictions include Unarmed Robbery, Misdemeanor Larceny and Misdemeanor Possession of Marijuana. SPANN was on parole at the time of his arrest and his driver's license had been suspended.

U.S. Attorney Murphy commended the efforts of agents of ATF and officers of the Detroit Police Department for their diligent work on this case. "The SPANN case came to our office through the Project Safe Neighborhoods program. This sentence of over 10 years is just one example of how the U.S. Attorney's office will not relent when it comes to combating gun and drug violators."

ATF SAC Goddard stated, "The conviction and lengthy sentence in this case highlights the significance Project Safe Neighborhoods plays in our fight to keep guns and violent offenders off the street."

U.S. Attorney Murphy commended the efforts of agents of ATF, officers of the Detroit Police Department and Assistant U.S. Attorney Susan Gillooly for their diligent work on this case.

For questions regarding the Project Safe Neighborhoods in the Eastern District of Michigan please contact Peggy Goodwin, The Goodwin Co. at 248-543-3891.