



PRESS NOTICE

BILL NETTLES
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA

*1441 Main Street, Suite 500 * Columbia, SC 29201 * (803) 929-3000**

March 6, 2012

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT PERSON: BETH DRAKE
(803) 929-3000
Beth.Drake@USDOJ.gov

FEDERAL GRAND JURY INDICTMENTS

United States Attorney Bill Nettles announced the return of the following Grand Jury indictments:

BLYTHEWOOD MAN CHARGED WITH STEALING SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS ---- Levi D. Brown, age 66, was charged in a three-count Indictment in connection with a scheme to steal another person's Social Security benefits. Mr. Brown is charged with aggravated identity theft, a violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1028A. The maximum penalty for that charge is a mandatory two year sentence. Mr. Brown is also charged with theft of government funds and making a false statement to obtain Social Security benefits, violations of Title 18, United States Code, Section 641 and Title 42, United States Code, Section 408(a)(7)(B). The maximum penalties for those charges are imprisonment of ten and five years, respectively. This case was investigated by agents of the United States Social Security Administration - Office of Inspector General and that he has assigned the case to Assistant United States Attorney T. DeWayne Pearson of the Columbia office for prosecution.

Former Department of Energy Contractor Charged with Fraud. Gregory Richey, age 41, of Hampstead, North Carolina, was charged in a 4-count Indictment with theft of government funds and making false statement to government officials, violations of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 641

and 1001, respectively. The indictment alleges that Richey falsely claimed eligibility for per diem benefits that he received through a program funded by the United States Department of Energy. The maximum penalty Gregory Richey could receive is up to 10 years imprisonment. The case was investigated by agents of the United States Department of Energy and is assigned to Assistant United States Attorney Dean Eichelberger of the Columbia office for prosecution.

Eleven Charged in VA Travel Fraud. Eleven South Carolina residents have been charged in an investigation into fraudulent claims against the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The cases stem from an investigation into a program offered by the VA where veterans with service connected disabilities are reimbursed for costs incurred to travel to the VA Medical Center in Columbia, South Carolina, for treatment. The defendants are alleged to have falsely claimed that they lived outside the Columbia area in order to receive larger reimbursements. Each defendant is charged in a two-count Indictment with making false claims against the United States, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 287, and with fraudulently obtaining money through a program administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs, in violation of Title 38, United States Code, Section 6102. The eleven defendants and the particulars of the cases are identified below:

<u>DEFENDANT/AGE</u>	<u>CLAIMED RESIDENCE</u>	<u>AMOUNT RECEIVED</u>
Kirby Anderson/55	Greenville, SC	\$ 9,337.00
James Baker/55	Greenville, SC	\$ 5,356.17
Ricky Byrd/50	Enoree, SC	\$ 7,637.00
Craig Colvin/39	Florence, SC	\$ 7,880.64
John Dowdle/53	Gaffney, SC	\$ 3,170.00
Larry Ford/53	Sumter, SC	\$ 1,631.66
Quentin Gunter/39	Spartanburg, SC	\$ 6,539.68
Sam Harris/56	Spartanburg, SC	\$ 5,579.77
Dennis Moore/62	Marlboro County, SC	\$11,851.00
Alfonza Parker/39	Greeleyville, SC	\$ 5,961.52
Gerald Randolph/57	Mullins, SC	\$14,907.57

The maximum possible penalty each defendant faces on the false claim count is 5 years imprisonment and \$250,000 in fines. Each faces up to 1 year imprisonment and \$100,000 in fines on the charge of fraudulent obtaining money from the VA. These cases were investigated by agents of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Inspector General, and they are assigned to Assistant United States Attorney Dean A. Eichelberger of the Columbia office for prosecution.

The United States Attorney stated that all charges in these Indictments are merely accusations and that all defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

#####