



# PRESS NOTICE

## W. WALTER WILKINS UNITED STATES ATTORNEY DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA

---

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

---

**September 18, 2009**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**CONTACT PERSON: KEVIN F. MCDONALD**  
**(803) 929-3000**

### **TWO LAWYERS INDICTED, ONE PLEADS GUILTY TO MONEY LAUNDERING, MAIL FRAUD CONSPIRACY**

Columbia, South Carolina---- United States Attorney W. Walter Wilkins stated that John W. Harte, Jr., age 63, of Aiken, South Carolina, pled guilty today to conspiracy to commit mail fraud and money laundering. During the plea hearing, Harte admitted to being involved in a conspiracy to liquidate and conceal monies and property which had been stolen by a former client, William J. Trier, II, from his employer Dixie Narco. United States District Judge Margaret B. Seymour accepted the guilty plea and will sentence him at a later date.

Two other attorneys allegedly involved in the same scheme, John Fitzgerald O'Connor, Jr., age 63, and Michael D. Shavo, age 38, both of Columbia, South Carolina, were indicted on Wednesday, September 16, 2009, for multiple charges including, conspiracy to commit money laundering, mail fraud, obstruction of justice, and making false statements.

According to Harte, he, O'Connor and Shavo assisted Trier after he was terminated from Crane Co., a vending machine manufacturing company in Aiken County, as the director of logistics in the shipping department. From 1997 through October 2007, Trier embezzled funds from Crane by creating phony invoices from two fictitious freight transport companies and submitting them to Crane for payment. He used his position to approve the payment of the fraudulent invoices, and received company payments mailed to a Post Office box he had opened as the mailing address for the phantom companies. Over a ten year period, Trier collected approximately \$5,200,000.00 using the false invoice scam. When Trier learned that he was under investigation, he contacted Harte to help him hide assets. According to Harte he enlisted the help of O'Connor and his associate attorney Shavo.

Trier pled guilty to mail fraud and money laundering on April 30, 2008 and was recently sentenced to 63 months of imprisonment, ordered to pay \$5,272,556 in restitution, and to forfeit millions of dollars in assets. Harte is facing a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment and a fine of \$250,000.

The maximum penalty O'Connor and Shavo are facing is twenty years imprisonment and a fine of \$250,000.

The case is being investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Postal Inspection Service, and the Internal Revenue Service. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Deborah B. Barbier and Mark C. Moore of the Columbia office are prosecuting the case.

The United States Attorney stated that the charges against O'Connor and Shavo are merely accusations and that all defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

#####