



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

John E. Murphy, Acting U.S. Attorney

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WHITNEY WOMAN CHARGED FEDERALLY FOR ALLEGED ROLE IN PONZI SCHEME

Authorities are seeking information regarding other potential victims

John E. Murphy, Acting United States Attorney, announced that in Waco, 68-year-old Julia Ann Schmidt of Whitney, Texas, stands charged with two counts of mail fraud in connection with a large-scale Ponzi scheme.

A federal grand jury indictment returned last week alleges that between April 2007 and May 2009, Schmidt fraudulently represented herself to unsuspecting individuals as an agent for Fortis Investments. On repeated occasions, she solicited money from clients promising to generate an approximate 30% return on their investments. Schmidt informed clients that portions of their investments would involve the Texas Ranger Museum, Hillcrest Hospital and the Waco Riverwalk Project. As a result of her scheme, authorities believe Schmidt defrauded her victims of more than \$500,000. According to the indictment, most, if not all, of the investors received neither their original investment nor the interest income.

This case is being investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. If anyone believes they have been victimized by Schmidt as a result of her alleged scheme, you are asked to contact the Waco FBI office at (254) 772-1627.

Upon conviction, Schmidt faces up to 20 years in federal prison per count. She is currently on bond pending trial.

It is being prosecuted for the government by Assistant United States Attorney Greg Gloff.

An indictment is merely a charge and should not be considered as evidence of guilt. The defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

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