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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

KAPOK JUROR PLEADS GUILTY TO BRIBERY

Dorothy Hendricks, 54, of St. Croix pleaded guilty today in federal court on St. Croix to soliciting a bribe when she served as a juror in the case of United States v. Auffenberg, (also known as the KAPOK case), United States Attorney Paul A. Murphy and FBI Special Agent-in-Charge, Luis S. Fraticelli announced today . During the hearing before the Honorable Harvey Bartle, sitting by designation, Ms. Hendricks admitted that on March 1, 2009, while serving as a juror in the KAPOK case, she contacted one of the defense attorneys in the case, Lee Rohn, and demanded and sought from Attorney Rohn the payment of \$3,000.00 to \$5,000.00 in return for a “Not Guilty” verdict.

Under federal law, a person who serves as a juror in a case in the District Court is considered a public official for that purpose, and is subject to the federal statute prohibiting public officials from seeking or accepting bribes. Ms. Hendricks admitted during the plea hearing that in exchange for the money, she would have been influenced in the performance of an official act, her juror vote on the case, which would be a fraud upon the United States and a violation of her official duty as a juror.

“That trust in the jury system is the cornerstone of our entire criminal justice system,” U.S. Attorney Murphy said. “If trust in the jury system is without foundation for any reason the system will fail. There is no feature of our legal system which is more important to every citizen and to the

government because a decision by a 'jury of our peers' is essential to provide a fair and impartial result for those charged with a crime and for the government that has alleged a crime against the citizen."

U.S. Attorney Murphy said: "One of the highest duties and services that any citizen has to perform is to participate in the American system of justice as a juror and ensure that their fellow citizens and government receive a fair and impartial verdict and that their decision is based on the facts and law which they hear in the courtroom. People's lives are at stake with every jury's decision. The fabric of society is bound together by a common commitment to faithful service according to the jurors' oath to find the truth in the facts."

U.S. Attorney Murphy said: "Every citizen must, when called for jury duty, be completely honest in every aspect of this public service and give absolute fidelity to his/her oath to be honest in the verdict based on the facts and the law. If the jury system is corrupted, by bribes, considerations of family and friends, bias, prejudice, or any other improper considerations, then everyone's safety and freedom will be lost."

U.S. Attorney Murphy said: "Federal authorities have and will continue to be alert to any indication that the system of justice is being corrupted by any person, and federal law enforcement will vigorously investigate fully all allegations of misconduct and will prosecute those who are responsible for any attempt to corrupt the system of justice which is essential to the safety of the entire community. A society that does not guarantee a fair and impartial trial to every citizen and the government is lost and will crumble into ruin."

The defendant faces a maximum penalty of 15 years in prison, a fine of up to \$250,000.00, a term of supervised release of up to 5 years, and a \$100.00 special assessment. In addition, she may be disqualified from holding any public office of honor, trust, or profit under the United States.

