



United States Attorney
Southern District of New York

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CONTACT: U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
MEGAN GAFFNEY, HEATHER TASKER,
BRIDGET KELLY
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
(212) 637-2600

**GOSHEN MAN SENTENCED TO FOUR MONTHS IN PRISON FOR
ILLEGALLY IMPORTING ENDANGERED BIRDS AND MAKING FALSE
STATEMENTS TO THE GOVERNMENT**

MICHAEL J. GARCIA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that THOMAS CULLEN was sentenced today in White Plains federal court to four months in prison for importing birds in violation of the Wild Bird Conservation Act and making false statements to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. The Honorable COLLEEN MCMAHON, United States District Judge, who presided over a September 2005 trial of CULLEN, also sentenced CULLEN to three years of supervised release and a \$1,000 fine.

The evidence at trial established that Cullen, 54, of Goshen, New York, imported two birds protected by an international agreement known as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. Importation of such birds -- in this case Black Sparrowhawks, a species native to Africa -- is generally banned by the Wild Bird Conservation Act. The birds at issue in this case were imported under an exception to the ban for importations exclusively for the purpose of bringing to the United States personally owned pets of individuals returning after being out of the country for a minimum of a year. But the evidence at trial showed that the use of that exception was abused. The person listed as the importer of the birds testified that they were not his pets; rather, the birds were truly intended for CULLEN. The testimony also established that the documents submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to obtain the import permits contained false representations as to the purpose of the importation and to whom the Black Sparrowhawks had been sold.

During the sentencing today, JUDGE MCMAHON found that CULLEN had obstructed the Government's investigation into his

activities. CULLEN is scheduled to begin serving his sentence on June 1, 2006.

Mr. GARCIA praised the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for its investigative efforts in this case.

Assistant United States Attorneys STEPHEN J. RITCHIN and JESSE M. FURMAN are in charge of the prosecution.

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