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**OWNERS, OPERATORS, AND EMPLOYEES OF LARGE-SCALE
PROSTITUTION AND MONEY LAUNDERING BUSINESS PLEAD GUILTY**

MICHAEL J. GARCIA, United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and MARTIN E. FICKE, Special Agent in Charge of the New York City office of United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement, announced today that ten defendants have entered guilty pleas to various charges arising from a federal investigation into a lucrative interstate prostitution and money laundering business. The investigation focused on the activities of a Manhattan-based escort service operating under several names, including "New York Elites" and "Exotica 2000" ("New York Elites/Exotica 2000"), which generated approximately \$13.5 million in revenues over the last four years.

According to court documents, from at least 2000 through April 2005, New York Elites/Exotica 2000 was owned and operated by ELENA TROCHTENKOVA and RADY ABDEL SALEM ABBASSY, a/k/a "Rody Alexander," and it presented itself on the Internet as an "adult escort agency" that offered "discrete and professional" services for its clients. In reality, however, the service offered by New York Elites/Exotica 2000 was simply sex in exchange for money. Relying largely on the Internet to attract clients, New York Elites/Exotica 2000's website posted sexually suggestive photographs and descriptions of its escorts and promised its customers a wide variety of experiences. Customers interested in a particular escort could either submit a reservation request online or call New York Elites/Exotica 2000. After the client underwent a background check, an appointment was scheduled with an escort. Many of the escorts featured on New York Elites/Exotica 2000's web site were foreign nationals. In addition, many of the escorts featured on New York Elites/Exotica 2000's web site were prominent adult film actresses. Hourly rates for an escort ranged from at least \$500 to \$1,500 or higher for an adult film "star."

According to court documents, New York Elites/Exotica 2000's web site advertised that "All of our girls travel," and

offered to arrange trysts with its escorts in locations outside of New York. In addition, New York Elites/Exotica 2000 also regularly arranged "tours" for its prostitutes in other cities in the United States such as Boston, Hoboken, Philadelphia, Miami, Chicago, Detroit, and Scottsdale, Arizona. New York Elites/Exotica 2000 also arranged for tours of its more prominent prostitutes in foreign countries as well, including Germany and the United Kingdom. New York Elites/Exotica 2000 typically arranged for the travel of its escorts through an Internet travel agency such as Hotwire.com.

According to court documents, in order to promote the carrying on of their prostitution business as well as to conceal the source of their illegal proceeds, TROCHTCHENKOVA and ABBASSY set up multiple front companies with separate bank accounts that were used to receive cash and credit card charges from clients, and to pay prostitutes and the other employees of New York Elites/Exotica 2000. Among the front companies were "Royal Papyrus, Inc.," "The Fortunate 500, Inc.," "London Fox and Associates, Inc.," and "Ce Soir, Inc." During the roughly four-year period covered in the Indictment, New York Elites/Exotica 2000 received through its various front companies approximately \$13.5 million in identifiable revenues. Some of this money was subsequently used to pay for a home owned by TROCHTCHENKOVA, as well as to fund a Brooklyn restaurant owned by TROCHTCHENKOVA and ABBASSY.

TROCHTCHENKOVA pled guilty on December 30, 2005, to five felony charges, including transporting individuals and persuading individuals to travel for the purpose of engaging in prostitution, conspiring to do so, and conspiring to commit, as well as committing, money laundering. TROCHTCHENKOVA faces a maximum term of imprisonment of 75 years on these charges, as well as other penalties, including a term of supervised release, fines, and forfeiture of her criminally-derived property.

ABBASSY, a citizen of Egypt, pled guilty on January 5, 2006, to two felony charges, including conspiring to commit money laundering and illegal re-entry into the United States. ABBASSY faces a maximum term of imprisonment of 40 years on these charges, as well as other penalties, including a term of supervised release and fines.

In addition to TROCHTCHENKOVA and ABBASSY, eight other defendants - VALERIE HAIRSTON, NANCY KHAJA, DANA COLLESAR, VERA NGWA, JENNIFER MOORE, CHERIE BOOKER, FELICIA GORDON, and LONTINA BRADFORD - who, according to court documents, worked at New York Elites/Exotica 2000 answering telephone calls, processing payments, and scheduling sessions between clients and escorts - have all pled guilty to the misdemeanor offense of aiding and abetting the hiring of aliens who were unauthorized to work in the United States.

Mr. GARCIA praised ICE and its agents in New York for its efforts in this long-term investigation.

Assistant United States Attorneys BENJAMIN GRUENSTEIN and W.S. WILSON LEUNG are in charge of the prosecution.

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