



Department of Justice

United States Attorney A. Brian Albritton
Middle District of Florida

Tampa	Orlando	Jacksonville	Ocala	Fort Myers
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE			CONTACT: STEVE COLE	
July 30, 2009			PHONE: (813) 274-6136	
http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/flm/pr			FAX: (813) 274-6300	

ODESSA MAN CHARGED WITH MAIL FRAUD AND TAX FRAUD

Tampa, Florida - United States Attorney A. Brian Albritton announces the unsealing of an indictment charging Joseph Christopher Hooker (age 40, of Odessa) with mail fraud and tax fraud. If convicted on all counts, Hooker faces a maximum penalty of 32 years in federal prison. The indictment also notifies Hooker that the United States is seeking a money judgment in the amount of \$3,413,570.94, the amount of the proceeds allegedly obtained as a result of the mail fraud offense.

According to the indictment, between approximately 2002 and October 2006, Hooker, in complicity with another individual, executed a scheme to defraud his employer, Blue Hawaiian Products. Blue Hawaiian Products was a company that was in the business of manufacturing and selling fiberglass swimming pool shells.

It is alleged that Hooker acquired customer checks that had been sent by private and interstate carrier and made payable to his employer, Blue Hawaiian Products, and that, in complicity with another, Hooker opened a business checking account in which the checks were deposited.

Hooker allegedly prepared fraudulently altered invoices reflecting substantially lower purchase prices than the price reflected in the true invoices that had been sent to the Blue Hawaiian Products customers. Those involved in the scheme allegedly purchased cashier

checks with funds withdrawn from the Blue Hawaiian Pool Supplies account in amounts substantially less than the original customers' checks, which cashier checks were then remitted to Blue Hawaiian Products in payment of the fraudulently altered (lowered) invoice prices.

It is alleged that the funds Hooker acquired from his participation in the fraud scheme constituted income to him that he should have included on his income tax returns. According to the indictment, Hooker caused fraudulent Federal Individual Income Tax Returns, Forms 1040, to be prepared and filed with the IRS, knowing that they were fraudulent in that they omitted a substantial amount of income.

On July 24, 2009, Jack Shaw pled guilty before a federal magistrate judge to mail fraud and to willfully subscribing a materially false federal income tax return, in connection with the same scheme. He will be sentenced later this year.

An indictment is merely a formal charge that a defendant has committed a violation of the federal criminal laws, and every defendant is presumed innocent unless, and until, proven guilty.

This case was investigated by the Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation and the United States Postal Inspection Service. It will be prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Robert T. Monk.