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Acting U.S. Attorney Anderson: Grand jury returns indictments

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MADISON, WIS. — A federal grand jury in the Western District of Wisconsin, sitting in Madison, returned the following indictments yesterday. You are advised that a charge is merely an accusation and that a defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

The maximum statutory sentence is prescribed by Congress and is provided here for informational purposes. If convicted, the sentencing of a defendant will be determined by the court based on the advisory Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

Sauk City Man Charged in Fraud Scheme

James Kolf, 64, Sauk City, Wis., is charged with 16 counts of wire fraud, one count of mail fraud, and one count of money laundering. The indictment alleges that from April 2011 to August 2016, Kolf engaged in a scheme to defraud investors by encouraging his brokerage customers to invest in SFN Financial Network, which was not a legitimate investment. The indictment alleges that Kolf provided investors with fictitious account statements and with prospectuses and marketing material for a similarly named investment that was unrelated to SFN Financial Network.

The indictment alleges that through this fraud scheme, Kolk received $905,077 in investor funds which he failed to invest and instead used for his own purposes. The indictment alleges that Kolf used the investor funds to pay his personal living expenses, including the cash purchase of his residence in Sauk City, home improvements, credit card payments, an outstanding federal tax liability, property taxes, and the cash purchase of a car. The money laundering count alleges that in May 2014, Kolf withdrew $280,534 from a business checking account he had set up in the name of SFN Financial Network and purchased a cashier's check used to fund the purchase of his residence in Sauk City.

If convicted, Kolf faces a maximum penalty of 20 years in federal prison on each wire and mail fraud count, and 10 years on the money laundering count. The charges against him are the result of an investigation by IRS Criminal Investigation. The prosecution of this case is being handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Aaron Wegner.

Madison Man Charged with Drug and Gun Crimes

William D. Flowers, 26, Madison, Wis., is charged with two counts of distributing oxycodone, four counts of distributing heroin, and with being a felon in possession of a firearm. The indictment alleges that he distributed oxycodone and heroin in February and March 2017, and that he possessed a handgun on March 13, 2017.

If convicted, Flowers faces a maximum penalty of 20 years in federal prison on each distribution charge and 10 years on the felon in possession charge. The charges against him are the result of an investigation by the Dane County Narcotics Task Force, Madison Police Department, and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. The prosecution of this case is being handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert A. Anderson.

Madison Man Charged with Drug Crimes

Joseph Thigpen, 40, Madison, Wis., is charged with five counts of distributing heroin, one count of possessing heroin with intent to distribute, and one count of possessing 28 grams or more of crack cocaine with the intent to distribute. The indictment alleges that he distributed heroin in February and March 2017, and that he possessed heroin and crack cocaine on March 8, 2017.

If convicted, Thigpen faces a maximum penalty of 20 years in federal prison on the heroin counts, and a mandatory minimum of five years and a maximum of 40 years on the crack cocaine charge. The charges against him are the result of an investigation by the Wisconsin Department of Justice, Division of Criminal Investigation; Columbia County Sheriff's Office; Portage Police Department; and Dane County Narcotics Task Force. The prosecution of this case will be handled by

Assistant U.S. Attorney Timothy M. O'Shea.

Federal Prison Inmate Charged with Possessing Prohibited Object

Carlos Pena-Prado, 32, is charged with possessing a prohibited object designed to be used as a weapon, while an inmate at the Federal Correctional Institution at Oxford, Wis. The indictment alleges that on January 17, 2017, he possessed a six-inch piece of metal sharpened to a point at one end.

If convicted, Pena-Prado faces a maximum penalty of five years in federal prison. The charge against him is the result of an investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Federal Bureau of Prisons. The prosecution of this case will be handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Aaron Wegner.

Mexican Citizen Charged with Illegally Reentering U.S.

Jose Amando Elias-Rios, 27, a citizen of Mexico found in Jackson County, Wis., is charged with illegally reentering the United States after previously being deported. The indictment alleges that he was found in the United States on March 14, 2017.

If convicted, Elias-Rios faces a maximum penalty of 10 years in federal prison. The charge against him is the result of an investigation by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The prosecution of this case is being handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert A. Anderson.