



Department of Justice

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FINAL DEFENDANT SENTENCED IN “FOOD STAMP” FRAUD AND MONEY LAUNDERING CONSPIRACY INVOLVING GROCERY STORE

DAYTON – Omar Yahya, 56, formerly known as Darnell Bernard Watts, was sentenced to 12 months one day in prison followed by three years of supervised release for his role in a conspiracy to use a Dayton grocery store to launder money and defraud the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Yahya pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy and one count of conspiracy to launder money.

Yahya and three co-defendants were also sentenced to repay \$3.8 million, which represents a portion of the money involved in the scheme, and forfeit their interests in approximately \$80,209 in bank accounts and cash, and four firearms seized during execution of a search warrant in May, 2011.

Carter M. Stewart, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio, Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine, Joe Smith, Special Agent in Charge, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Inspector General (USDA), Darryl Williams, Special Agent in Charge, Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Criminal Investigation, Thomas P. Charles, Director, Ohio Department of Public Safety and other members of the Ohio Organized Crime Investigations Commission Task Force announced the sentence handed down today by U.S. District Judge Timothy S. Black.

A federal grand jury indicted Yahya, along with Al-Idu al-Gaheem, 62, formerly known as Lawrence Phillips, Abdul R. Qadir, 64, formerly known as Frank Appleberry, Jr., and Abdul H. Yamini Sr, 71, formerly known as Larry Shipp, in March 2012 following a multi-agency investigation into illegal activities at the Five Pillars Market and Restaurant.

Between 2009 and 2011, the four conspired to traffic in electronic benefit cards in order to defraud the USDA’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The conspiracy caused more than \$3.8 million in criminal proceeds in the form of USDA SNAP wire transfers to be deposited into various bank accounts and more than \$1.2 million in criminal proceeds in the form of currency withdrawals to be made from the store’s accounts.

The other three defendants were also sentenced to twelve months and one day in prison by Judge Black on charges of conspiracy and conspiracy to launder money. Al-Gaheem was sentenced on December 13, 2012. Qadir was sentenced on October 25, 2012. Yamini was sentenced on December 20, 2012.

The investigation was conducted by a task force operating under the Ohio Organized Crime Investigation Commission. In addition to the agencies named above, other agencies participating in the task force and in this investigation include the Bureau of Alcohol, Firearms, Tobacco and

Explosives (ATF), the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation, and police departments in Centerville, Kettering, Miamisburg, Moraine, Oakwood and West Carrollton.

Stewart commended the cooperative investigation by the task force members, and recognized Assistant U.S. Attorney Dwight Keller, who represented the United States in this case.

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