



Department of Justice

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**FOURTH DEFENDANT PLEADS GUILTY TO ROLE IN MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR
“FOOD STAMP” FRAUD AND MONEY LAUNDERING CONSPIRACY INVOLVING
INNER-CITY GROCERY STORE**

DAYTON – The last of four Dayton men charged with using an inner-city retail grocery store to launder money and defraud the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) pleaded guilty in U.S. District Court here today to one count of conspiracy and one count of conspiracy to launder money.

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, Robert Booker, Executive Director, Ohio Investigative Unit and other members of the Ohio Organized Crime Investigations Commission Task Force announced the pleas entered today by Omar S. Yahya, 56, formerly known as Darnell Bernard Watts, before U.S. District Judge Timothy S. Black.

Money laundering conspiracy is punishable by up to 20 years in prison. Conspiracy is punishable by up to five years in prison. Judge Black will schedule a date for Yahya’s sentencing.

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.

All four defendants pleaded guilty to conspiracy and conspiracy to launder money. Al-Gaheem pleaded guilty on August 9, 2012 and is scheduled to be sentenced on November 29. Qadir pleaded guilty on July 12, 2012 and is awaiting sentencing which is set for October 25. Yamini pleaded guilty on July 26, 2012 and is scheduled for sentencing on November 15.

All four defendants also agreed to a forfeiture money judgment of \$3.8 million, which represents a portion of the money involved in the scheme, and forfeiture of their interests in approximately \$70,000 in bank accounts and cash, and four firearms seized during execution of a search warrant in May, 2011.

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 is prosecuting the case.

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