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Federal Prison Employee Sentenced for Defrauding Inmate Families

BEAUMONT, Texas – A 43-year-old Beaumont, Texas woman has been sentenced for her part in a conspiracy targeting federal inmates and their families in the Eastern District of Texas, announced U.S. Attorney Joseph D. Brown today.

Tanya L. Richard pleaded guilty on June 14, 2018, to conspiracy to commit wire fraud today and was sentenced to 24 months in federal prison today by U.S. District Judge Marcia Crone. Richard was also ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$166,250.

According to information presented in court, while employed as an administrative employee of the Federal Correctional Complex in Beaumont, Richard was involved in a wide-spread fraud scheme targeting the families of federal inmates. Six persons, some of whom were former federal inmates, pleaded guilty to a similar charge last year in the same scheme and are currently serving federal prison sentences for their involvement. The nationwide, six-year scheme defrauded the relatives of federal inmates by falsely representing that they could obtain reductions in their relatives' sentences in exchange for the payment of cash and wire transfers of funds. The payments were falsely represented to be for the payment for a network of confidential informants who would make undercover drug transactions under the direction of the courts and prosecutors which would allow the incarcerated inmates to ask the court for reductions of sentences for providing substantial assistance to the government under the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure. In reality, the money was spent for the personal benefit of the defendants and there was never any network of informants or undercover transactions. Federal inmates do not have to pay for substantial assistance motions for reductions of sentences which normally only require information to be provided by such inmates against co-defendants as well as trial testimony.

Richard's role in the scheme included obtaining confidential information from federal court presentence reports of inmates and drafting false cooperation agreements for inmate families that appeared to be from federal prosecutors and U.S. Attorneys. Richard is a former common-law spouse of Alvin James Warrick who pleaded guilty to a similar charge in the scheme last year. The scheme resulted in losses to inmate families from across the nation of over \$4 million dollars. Richard was placed on administrative leave from her position at the federal prison after her indictment in April 2018.

“This kind of fraud threatens the public's trust in the justice system,” said U.S. Attorney Joseph D. Brown. “The defendant targeted individuals and families who were

vulnerable, and violated the trust that had been placed in her as a public servant. It was important that there be a real consequence for that.”

“Defendant misled federal inmates and their family members about the sentencing reduction process, and defrauded these victims of millions of dollars. Our office is committed to protecting the integrity of the criminal justice system and will work tirelessly to investigate these types of schemes,” said Monte A. Cason, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General’s Dallas Field Division.

“Ms. Richard used her position at the U.S. Bureau of Prisons for personal monetary gain, and is now being held accountable for her actions. The FBI's mission is to protect the civil rights of all individuals. Included under that protection are individuals who have been incarcerated and their families. After a thorough and deliberate investigation, the FBI Beaumont Resident Agency partnered with the U.S. Attorney's Office of the Eastern District of Texas to ensure a sobering punishment was delivered," said Senior Supervisory Resident Agent Minique Crump of the Beaumont FBI Resident Agency.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation; Department of Justice, Office of the Inspector General; U.S. Marshals Service; Houston Police Department-Major Offenders Division; U.S. Attorney’s Offices in the Eastern District of Texas and Southern District of Florida. This case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert L. Rawls.

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