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Thursday, February 25, 2010

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THREE INDICTED FOR FRAUD IN CONNECTION WITH COUNTERFEIT ART SALES

Defendants Charged with Selling Counterfeit Clementine Hunter Paintings

Alexandria, La.: Three individuals were indicted by a federal grand jury for selling non-authentic paintings falsely attributed to Clementine Hunter, Acting United States Attorney William J. Flanagan announced today.

WILLIAM TOYE, age 78, of Baton Rouge; BERYL ANN TOYE, age 68, of Baton Rouge, Louisiana; and ROBERT E. LUCKY, JR., age 62, of New Orleans, Louisiana, were named in a four-count indictment which charges all three defendants with mail fraud and conspiracy to commit mail fraud.

Clementine Hunter was an African-American folk artist who lived in Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana. Ms. Hunter began painting in the late 1930's and continued to paint until a few days before her death on January 1, 1988. The value of Ms. Hunter's paintings vary and are actively sold on the open art market.

The indictment alleges that beginning sometime in 2000 and continuing until September 30, 2009, the defendants conspired to defraud several collectors of Ms. Hunter's paintings by misrepresenting the authenticity and origin of the paintings that LUCKY sold on behalf of the

TOYES. The indictment also alleges that the defendants committed three counts of mail fraud in furtherance of the conspiracy.

If convicted of conspiracy, the defendants face a maximum penalty of five years in prison, a \$250,000 fine, or both. Mail fraud carries a maximum penalty of twenty years, a \$250,000 fine or both.

All defendants have been ordered to appear for arraignment on March 17, 2010 at 10:00 a.m., before United States Magistrate Judge James D. Kirk.

An indictment is merely an accusation and all defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Alexandria Resident Agency, and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Alexander C. Van Hook and Cytheria D. Jernigan.

Individuals with information concerning this investigation are encouraged to contact Special Agent Randolph J. Deaton at the FBI in Alexandria at 318-443-5097.

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