

The United States Attorney's Office

Southern District of Florida

Press Release

FORMER MONROE COUNTY DEFENDANT FOUND GUILTY OF ALL COUNTS ON SCHEME TO OBSTRUCTION OF JUSTICE AND WITNESS TAMPERING

February 23, 2007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

R. Alexander Acosta, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, Alice Fisher, Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division, Jonathan I. Solomon, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Charles E. Hunter, Special Agent in Charge, Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation Division announce today that a federal jury in Key West, Florida convicted former Monroe County Attorney James T. Hendrick of conspiring to obstruct a federal grand jury and witness tampering.

After deliberating for approximately two hours, the jury found **James T. Hendrick**, 59, of Key West, Fla., guilty on one count of conspiracy, one count of obstruction of justice, and two counts of witness tampering. Hendrick is currently the named partner in the law firm of Morgan and Hendrick located in Key West. U.S. District Court Judge Shelby Highsmith ordered that the defendant be taken into custody immediately. Judge Highsmith set a sentencing date for May 4, 2007 in Miami.

The charges against Hendrick stem from a May 2004 indictment of former Monroe County Mayor John "Jack" London on charges of tax fraud and making false statements to the FBI. On May 19, 2005, Hendrick was added in a superseding indictment on charges of conspiring to obstruct and tamper with witnesses involved in the grand jury investigation of London. On July 13, 2005, London pleaded guilty to tax fraud and agreed to cooperate in the government's case against Hendrick. However, on Nov. 21, 2006, before trial could commence, London died of natural causes.

At trial, evidence showed that, in 1997, while serving as Monroe County Mayor, London received a \$29,000 bribe from Randall Hilliard, a political consultant who had been hired by a real estate developer to assist with obtaining building permits from the Monroe Board of County Commissioners. London used the money to satisfy an outstanding lien against a residential property he owned in Cork, Ireland. In 2002 and 2003, when confronted by agents with the FBI about his receipt of the \$29,000 bribe, London misled the investigators regarding the origin of the funds. Beginning in July 2003, and continuing into March 2004, Hendrick acted as a conduit between London and Hilliard to concoct a false story as to the true nature of the bribe payment. Hendrick did so knowing that the false information would be conveyed to a federal grand jury investigating the matter. Hendrick was the Monroe County Attorney at the time of the bribe and until September of 2003.

Mr. Acosta commended the investigative efforts of the FBI and the IRS Criminal Investigations Division. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Clark and Brenda K. Morris, Principal Deputy Chief of the Public Integrity Section of the Department of Justice.

A copy of this press release may be found on the website of the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Florida at <http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/fls>. Related court documents and information may be found on the website of the District Court for the Southern District of Florida at <http://www.flsd.uscourts.gov> or on <http://pacer.flsd.uscourts.gov>.

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