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FORMER U.S. IMMIGRATION OFFICER PLEADS GUILTY TO DESTROYING GOVERNMENT FILES AND PRODUCING A FALSE IMMIGRATION DOCUMENT

CHICAGO — A former U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) deportation officer pleaded guilty today to federal charges of obstruction of justice and producing a fraudulent immigration document. The defendant, **Thomas P. Randell**, 37, of Chicago, a deportation officer from 2000 to 2009, admitted that he facilitated the destruction of the master immigration files of two aliens to interfere with the administration of immigration laws, and, in a separate scheme, admitted that he fraudulently provided an immigration stamp conveying temporary legal resident status to an alien who was eligible for deportation.

The guilty plea was announced by Patrick J. Fitzgerald, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois; Robert D. Grant, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation; and Armando Lopez, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of the Inspector General.

Randell, who was indicted in early 2008, remains free on bond while awaiting sentencing, which U.S. District Judge Wayne Anderson scheduled for March 25, 2010. He faces a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison for obstruction of justice and 15 years in prison for producing a false

identification document and a \$250,000 fine on each count. According to a written plea agreement, the Government anticipates that Randell's advisory United States Sentencing Guidelines range is 27 to 33 months in prison.

As a deportation officer, Randell was responsible for supervising aliens who had been ordered deported, but were not in immigration custody. Randell met Alien A in 1998 while he was serving as an Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) detention officer and Alien A was in INS custody. Alien A was subsequently released from custody and a friendship between the two developed. In 2002, Alien A received a letter from the INS stating that his deportation was imminent. Alien A asked Randell to help in blocking the deportation and the deportation of Alien B, an acquaintance of Alien A who had received the same letter. Both Aliens A and B were Iraqi citizens of Assyrian decent. Randell told Alien A he would see what he could do to prevent any adverse action by INS.

In response to Alien A's request, Randell offered to make the complete master immigration files of both aliens "disappear" in a way that could not be traced back to Randell. Alien A accepted Randell's offer and, in early 2003, Randell obtained the files and subsequently aided and abetted Aliens A and B in shredding the files.

Randell also admitted that in June 2005 he fraudulently placed an Alien Documentation Identification and Telecommunication (ADIT) stamp in the Hungarian passport of Alien C, a legal permanent resident whose "green card" had expired. An ADIT stamp provides the same evidence of legal immigration status as a green card. Investigation determined that Alien C had become eligible for deportation after receiving state felony convictions. Randell admitted that he obtained an ADIT stamp from an unspecified employee of the Department of Homeland Security as such

stamps are not issued to deportation officers and issuing this benefit was not within the scope of his duties. Randell also admitted to a previous instance of providing an ADIT stamp to Alien C in 2003 at the behest of Alien A.

The Government is being represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney David Buvinger.

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