



U.S. Department of Justice

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Public Affairs**

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<http://www.justice.gov/usao/dc/index.html>

### **Four Men Indicted in Schemes to Corrupt and Defraud District of Columbia's Office of Tax and Revenue**

WASHINGTON – Four individuals were arrested yesterday on federal indictments alleging that they participated in corruption and fraud schemes centered at the District of Columbia's Office of Tax and Revenue (OTR).

Last week, a federal grand jury in the District of Columbia returned a sealed indictment alleging that Vincent Slater, 41, of Temple Hills, MD, the former supervisor of OTR's Compliance Administration Adjustment Unit; Anthony Merritt, 44, of Washington, D.C., a former employee of the District of Columbia Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA); and Andre de Moya, 46, of Brookeville, MD, a District business owner, conspired to fraudulently reduce the tax liabilities of de Moya's businesses by paying bribes to Slater. The indictment also alleges that two other District business owners, Chao Charles Zhou, 46, and Arman Amirshahi, 48, both of Maryland, participated in the conspiracy.

According to the indictment, Slater brokered bribery agreements with de Moya, Zhou, and Amirshahi through Merritt, whom Slater relied upon to communicate with the business owners and to collect bribe payments. The indictment alleges that Slater used his position at OTR to fraudulently eliminate tax liabilities of businesses owned by de Moya, Zhou, and Amirshahi. According to the indictment, Slater caused fraudulent tax adjustments to be entered into the computer database used by OTR to manage taxpayer accounts. These adjustments resulted in the granting of waivers and abatements for which the businesses were ineligible under OTR policies and procedures, as well as the creation of false tax credits that the indictment alleges Slater to have caused to be applied against the businesses' current liabilities. The indictment further alleges that Slater settled the tax liabilities of at least one business by creating

a fraudulent Offer in Compromise agreement, in which he falsely identified himself as a supervisor in the Collection Division, because he was not authorized to issue such an agreement in his role in the Adjustment Unit. Finally, the indictment alleges that Slater used his official position and knowledge of District tax laws to take measures to help co-conspirators unlawfully evade taxes without consequence.

In a separate indictment, also returned under seal by a federal grand jury in the District of Columbia last week, Bobby Tucker, 63, of Suffolk, Virginia, is alleged to have paid bribes to an OTR official in order to reduce the tax liabilities of a business he consulted and to take other actions to benefit Tucker's business interests as opportunities arose. The indictment alleges that Tucker agreed to pay an OTR official, who was working as a confidential source, to obtain referrals of city taxpayers with outstanding tax liabilities. According to the indictment, Tucker would then attempt to broker a bribery agreement whereby he would be paid by a business owner to facilitate a bribe to the OTR official to fraudulently reduce or eliminate tax liabilities.

Slater, Merritt, and de Moya were arrested Wednesday in the Metropolitan Area and presented to U.S. Magistrate Judge G. Michael Harvey of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. All three defendants were released on personal recognizance. They are each charged with one count of Conspiracy, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 371; Slater and de Moya are each charged with one count of Bribery, and Merritt is charged with two counts of Bribery, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 201; and all three defendants are charged with six counts of Money, Property, and Honest Services Wire Fraud, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 1343 and 1346. The case is assigned to U.S. District Judge Reggie B. Walton, who scheduled an initial status conference for De Moya, Merritt, and Slater on May 29, 2019.

Tucker was arrested on Wednesday in Suffolk, VA, and presented to U.S. Magistrate Judge Robert J. Krask of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, Norfolk Division. He was released on personal recognizance. Tucker is charged with one count of Bribery, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 201. Tucker's case is assigned to Chief Judge Beryl A. Howell of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. The next court date is May 31.

The charges in an indictment are merely allegations and every defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. The statutory maximum penalty for Conspiracy, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 371, is five years; for Bribery, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 201, the statutory maximum penalty is 15 years; and for Money, Property, and Honest Services Wire Fraud, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 1343 and 1346, the statutory maximum penalty is 20 years.

These cases are being investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the District of Columbia Office of Inspector General, with the assistance of the District of Columbia Office of the Chief Financial Officer, Office of Integrity and Oversight. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Emily Miller, Molly Gaston, and Peter Lallas of the Fraud and Public Corruption Section are prosecuting the cases.

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