



THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
EASTERN DISTRICT *of* OKLAHOMA

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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Eastern District of Oklahoma

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, September 13, 2019

Tiger Enters Guilty Plea To Federal Bribery Charge

MUSKOGEE, OKLAHOMA – The United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Oklahoma announced that Bristow, Oklahoma, resident GEORGE PHILLIP TIGER, age 69, entered a guilty plea today to Bribery Concerning Programs Receiving Federal Funds, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 666(a)(1)(B), punishable by not more than 10 years imprisonment, up to a \$250,000.00 fine, or both.

Tiger, the former Principal Chief of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, was an agent of the Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town (AQTT) from September 26, 2017 through December 4, 2018. His duties included serving as the Chairman of the Economic Development Authority (EDA) Board. The AQTT formed the EDA to identify, plan, initiate and develop tribal economic and industrial activities on behalf of the AQTT. The AQTT is an Indian tribal government and organization that received federal assistance in excess of \$10,000.00 during any one-year period from January 1, 2012 through the date of the indictment. The AQTT is headquartered in Wetumka, Oklahoma.

The Indictment to which Tiger entered his guilty plea alleged that from on or about September 26, 2017 through on or about February 15, 2019, in the Eastern District of Oklahoma and elsewhere, Defendant George Phillip Tiger did corruptly solicit, demand, accept and agree to accept a thing of value from persons known to the Grand Jury, intending to be influenced and rewarded in connection with a transaction or series of transactions of the Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town (AQTT) involving \$5,000.00 or more.

"Mr. Tiger took advantage of the position of trust he had been given by the people of the Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town. Instead of acting in the best interests of those he was appointed to serve, Tiger sought out and received unlawful profit for himself," said United States Attorney Brian J. Kuester. "This office and the agencies who have been involved in this investigation are committed to identifying, investigating, and prosecuting those who corrupt the positions of trust and authority they hold."

"While serving as an appointed official for the Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town, Tiger repeatedly exploited his position by soliciting and accepting bribes related to Tribal business. This plea reinforces the message that law enforcement will not tolerate tribal officials who engage in corrupt activity for personal financial gain at the expense of the people they serve," said Melissa Godbold, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI's Oklahoma City Division.

"This case demonstrates the commitment of the Defense Criminal Investigative Service (DCIS), along with our law enforcement partners, to aggressively pursue those who damage the economic health of Tribal organizations and their business entities that support critical national security programs funded by the Department of Defense (DoD)," said Michael Mentavlos, Special Agent-in-Charge of the DCIS Southwest Field Office. "DCIS will continue to investigate corruption and fraud that affects the DoD through the exploitation of Small Business Programs designed to help disadvantaged groups."

"The IRS is committed to devoting all resources necessary to assist our local, state, and federal law enforcement partners in evaluating financial aspects of criminal investigations," said Tamera Cantu, IRS Special Agent in Charge of the Dallas Field Office. "Today's guilty plea underscores that commitment, not only to our law enforcement partners, but to the taxpayers and citizens who rely on us to uphold and enforce the law."

The Defense Criminal Investigative Service (DCIS), Office of Inspector General, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Internal Revenue Service, Small Business Administration – Office of Inspector General, General Services Administration – Office of Inspector General, Army Criminal Investigations Division, and Naval Criminal Investigative Service participated in the investigation that led to the indictment.

The Honorable Kimberly E. West, Magistrate Judge in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Oklahoma, in Muskogee, accepted the plea and ordered the completion of a presentence investigation report. The defendant was allowed to remain free on a personal recognizance bond pending a sentencing hearing.

Assistant United States Attorney Douglas Horn, Assistant United States Attorney Ryan Heatherman, and Special Assistant United States Attorney Courtney Jordan represented the United States at the plea hearing.

Topic(s):

Financial Fraud
Indian Country Law and Justice
Public Corruption

Component(s):

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
USAO - Oklahoma, Eastern