



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

Thursday, August 13, 2020

**Two Individuals Sentenced For Bribery, Theft And/Or
Embezzlement Of Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town**

**Sentencings Total 60 Months, \$10,000 Fine, And Over \$1.35 Million
Restitution**

MUSKOGEE, OKLAHOMA – The United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Oklahoma announced the sentencings of Bristow, Oklahoma resident, George Phillip Tiger, age 70, and Aaron Dewayne Terry, age 64, of Wichita Falls, Texas. Mr. Tiger was sentenced to 12 months and 1 day imprisonment, 2 years' supervised release, and ordered to pay a \$10,000.00 fine for bribery concerning programs receiving federal funds, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 666(a)(1)(B). Mr. Terry was sentenced to 48 months' imprisonment, 3 years' supervised release, and ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$1,250,000 for the theft and embezzlement of funds from business entities wholly owned by the Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town ("AQTT"). Mr. Terry was also sentenced to 36 months' imprisonment, 1 year supervised release, and ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$105,068.58 for federal tax charges. Mr. Terry's sentencings are to run concurrently.

The AQTT is a federally recognized Indian tribe located in Oklahoma with an enrollment of 461 members. The AQTT-owned business entities focus primarily on federal contract procurement in Huntsville, Alabama. The AQTT is headquartered in Wetumka, Oklahoma.

Tiger, the former Principal Chief of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, was an agent of the 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 Indictment to which Tiger entered his guilty plea alleged that from on or about September 26, 2017 through on or about February 15, 2019, he corruptly solicited, demanded, accepted and agreed to accept a bribe from Mr. Aaron Terry, intending to be influenced and rewarded in connection with a transaction or series of transactions of the AQTT.

Mr. Terry held various executive management and control positions within the AQTT-owned business entities. He pled guilty to one count of Theft By An Agent Of An Indian Tribal Government Receiving Federal Funds, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 666(a)(1)(A); one count of Bribery Concerning Programs Receiving Federal Funds, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 666(a)(1)(B); and one count of Conspiracy to Commit Bribery, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 371. Mr. Terry also pled guilty via Information to two counts of personal Tax Fraud, in violation of Title 26, United States Code, Section 7206(1).

"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. Terry likewise exploited his position as an agent of a tribal government for his own selfish and unlawful gain." 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 appointed officials within the Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town, George Tiger and Aaron Terry engaged in various bribery schemes with the sole intention of personal financial gain," said Melissa Godbold, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI's Oklahoma City Field Office. "The prosecution of these subjects should serve as a warning that law enforcement will not tolerate officials who abuse their positions of trust."

"The sentencings today illustrate the commitment of the Defense Criminal Investigative Service (DCIS), along with our law enforcement partners, to aggressively pursue those who exploit, for their own benefit, 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 Administration programs designed to help disadvantaged groups."

"Today's sentence sends a clear message that the laws of the land apply to everyone, regardless of position or power," said Kevin Caramucci, Assistant Special Agent in Charge, IRS-CI's Dallas Field Office. "Public officials who fail to faithfully discharge the duties of their office will be investigated, prosecuted and subjected to the full punishment of the law for their actions."

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

The Honorable Ronald A. White, U.S. District Judge in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Oklahoma, in Muskogee, presided over the sentencing hearings for each of the defendants. 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 sentencing hearing. Tiger and Terry will be supervised by the United States Probation Office for the Eastern District of Oklahoma.

Topic(s):

Financial Fraud

Component(s):

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)

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