

## \$5.5M Money Laundering Scheme

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Gregory A. White, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio, today announced that, following a four-week trial before the Honorable Lesley Wells in Cleveland, a federal jury convicted Horacio H. Munar, also known as "Oscar," and also known as Samuel Berger and Daniel Diaz, 57, of 126 Chelsea Hills Drive, Benicia, California, of one count of conspiracy to commit bank fraud, seven counts of bank fraud, and one count of conspiracy to commit money laundering.

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(Media-Newswire.com) - Gregory A. White, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio, today announced that, following a four-week trial before the Honorable Lesley Wells in Cleveland, a federal jury convicted Horacio H. Munar, also known as "Oscar," and also known as Samuel Berger and Daniel Diaz, 57, of 126 Chelsea Hills Drive, Benicia, California, of one count of conspiracy to commit bank fraud, seven counts of bank fraud, and one count of conspiracy to commit money laundering.

Evidence at the trial demonstrated that, between 2002 and 2005, Munar conspired with others, including Daniel Barnicle of Lorain, Ohio, and committed bank fraud by depositing forged and stolen third-party checks into fifteen federally-insured financial institutions, resulting in losses to the banks. The total amount involved in the scheme exceeded \$5.5 million. Evidence at the trial further established that Munar conspired with others to launder the proceeds of the bank fraud by making wire transfers to banks in Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay, as well as by using AAA global currency cards to withdraw proceeds through Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) in Argentina and Uruguay. The evidence at trial further established that Munar had told Barnicle that Munar's organization controlled the unions at the international airport in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and that baggage handlers specifically targeted inbound checks drawn on United States banks but made payable to individuals in South America.

Sentencing was set for July 23, 2007. Judge Wells ordered Munar held without bond pending sentencing.

The investigation was conducted jointly by Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the United States Postal Inspection Service, with significant assistance from the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation Division. The investigating agents were able to link the activities of Munar and his organization to operators and bank accounts in Cleveland, Ohio; San Francisco, California; San Diego, California; Denver, Colorado; Normal/Bloomington, Illinois; Dothan, Alabama; Gulf Shores, Alabama; Pelham, Alabama; Madison, Georgia; and Miami, Florida. Witnesses from each of those locations testified at the trial, including eleven different operators with whom Munar and his organization dealt.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Thomas J. Gruscinski and Special Assistant United States Attorney Ian Hoffman of the Department of Justice Antitrust Division.

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