



Department of Justice

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SANTA ROSA SUPERIOR LIGHTING OWNER CHARGED IN \$1.6 MILLION FALSE BILLING SCHEME

SAN FRANCISCO – A federal grand jury in San Francisco charged Brandon David Hill, 55, of Santa Rosa, Calif., with five counts of wire fraud in a false billing scheme that allegedly caused losses in excess of \$1.6 million to approximately 846 victim companies throughout the United States and Canada, United States Attorney Melinda Haag announced.

The indictment, which was unsealed today, charged that Brandon Hill carried out a scheme to defraud from 2002 through 2008 while operating two lighting product distribution businesses: Premier Lighting Products, in Sonoma, and Marin Counties, Calif., and later, Superior Lighting Products, in Santa Rosa, Calif. Allegedly, Hill sent invoices to companies falsely indicating that these companies owed payments for light bulbs that, in fact, the companies had never ordered. According to the indictment, Hill typically initiated the scheme by calling the victim company by telephone and falsely claiming that the company had already placed a sales order to buy light bulbs. Allegedly, Hill usually told the company that he would be shipping light bulbs to the company and asked for the shipping and billing addresses. Thereafter, Hill usually sent, by facsimile, a fraudulent invoice to the company for the light bulbs that it allegedly ordered even though the company had never agreed to purchase the light bulbs. Thereafter, Hill often followed up by telephone and sought payment on the false invoice.

Brandon Hill was arrested by the United States Postal Inspection Service in San Francisco this morning. He appeared before Magistrate Judge Elizabeth Laporte, who released him, and ordered that he appear again on Dec. 9, 2011, at which time conditions for his pre-trial release will be set.

The maximum statutory penalty for each count of wire fraud, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1343, is 20 years and a fine of \$250,000, plus restitution, if appropriate. However, any sentence following conviction would be imposed by the court after consideration of the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and the federal statute governing the imposition of a sentence, 18 U.S.C. § 3553.

Assistant United States Attorney Adam A. Reeves is prosecuting the case with the assistance of Beth Margen and Rayneisha Booth. The prosecution is the result of a long-term investigation by the United States Postal Inspection Service.

Please note, an indictment contains only allegations against an individual and, as with the defendants, Brandon Hill must be presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

Further Information:

Case Nos. CR 11-0880 WHA

A copy of this press release may be found on the U.S. Attorney's Office's website at www.usdoj.gov/usao/can.

Electronic court filings and further procedural and docket information are available at <https://ecf.cand.uscourts.gov/cgi-bin/login.pl>.

Judges' calendars with schedules for upcoming court hearings can be viewed on the court's website at www.cand.uscourts.gov.

All press inquiries to the U.S. Attorney's Office should be directed to Jack Gillund at (415) 436-6599 or by e-mail at Jack.Gillund@usdoj.gov.

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