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OWNER OF TIMBUKTU AND BY THE DOCKS RESTAURANTS PLEADS GUILTY TO
HARBORING ILLEGAL ALIENS

Forfeiting Nearly \$750,000 of Illegal Gains

Baltimore, Maryland - George Anagnostou, age 41, of Kingsville, Maryland, pleaded guilty today to harboring at least 24 unauthorized alien employees from Timbuktu and By the Docks restaurants for private financial gain and commercial advantage.

The guilty plea was announced by United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein; Special Agent in Charge William Winter of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement; and Anne Arundel County Police Chief James Teare, Sr.

"Employers who take advantage of illegal labor to gain a competitive advantage for their own profit should take note of today's guilty plea," said William Winter, Special Agent in Charge for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in Baltimore. "ICE is committed to investigating companies who engage in illegal employment schemes and targeting the profits that motivate them."

According to the plea agreement, Anagnostou has been the primary owner of Timbuktu Restaurant located at 1726 Dorsey Road in Hanover, Maryland since March 4, 2000. Since at least 2005, Anagnostou has also been a co-owner of By the Docks Restaurant located at 3321 Eastern Boulevard in Middle River, Maryland.

In 1999, 10 illegal workers were arrested during a search at Timbuktu. Subsequently, on April 04, 2000, an order was issued requiring Timbuktu to pay a fine and to stop employing and harboring illegal aliens. Anagnostou was aware of the immigration enforcement action, as well as the fact that Timbuktu employees were arrested and ordered deported as a result. Several of these individuals continued to work for Timbuktu after Anagnostou took over the restaurant.

Since 2000 and 2005, respectively, Anagnostou has been responsible for the hiring of employees at both Timbuktu and By the Docks. Anagnostou instructed his administrative employees and management to accept two forms of identification from applicants for employment, to make copies

of the identification documents, and to keep the copies of the identification documents in the applicant's personnel file. No further steps were taken to verify the authority of the applicant to be in or to work in the United States, nor were the legally required Employment Eligibility Verification forms (I-9s) filed, which direct the employer to attest that the employer has reviewed the permissible identification documents and that they appear to be genuine. When informed that many of the applicants for the busboy and kitchen positions at both Timbuktu and By the Docks were presenting obviously fake or fraudulent identification documentation, Anagnostou instructed his employees to stop asking questions and to continue to make copies of the fraudulent documentation for the personnel files.

During this same time period, Timbutku received notice from the Social Security Administration that a number of the restaurant's employees were using Social Security numbers that did not match the names assigned those numbers in the records of the Social Security Administration. Anagnostou made no effort to verify the Social Security numbers provided by his employees. All of the employees with mismatched Social Security numbers continued to be employed by Timbuktu.

Over the last five years, Anagnostou harbored at least 24 illegal alien employees from Timbuktu and By the Docks for financial gain and commercial advantage. Anagnostou gained the benefit of their labor, which facilitated the operation of his restaurants. He was able to guarantee their continuing labor by providing housing in residences close to the restaurants. An unlawful alien employee was also living upstairs at the By the Docks Restaurant. With the exception of those living at 1730 Dorsey Road, Anagnostou deducted rental payments from the overtime owed to the illegal alien employees, many of who regularly worked up to 80 hours a week and were routinely paid in cash to avoid their tax liability. Anagnostou did not claim the rental income on his tax returns, nor did he withhold FICA taxes from these overtime payments, as he was legally required to do.

On the morning of March 11, 2010, Immigration and Customs Enforcement executed several search warrants in connection with this investigation, during which time 29 unauthorized aliens were arrested at Timbuktu, By the Docks, and residences close to the restaurants.

Anagnostou faces a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison. U.S. District Judge William M. Nickerson has scheduled sentencing for October 28, 2010 at 10:00 a.m. As part of his plea agreement, Anagnostou is required to forfeit \$378,386.21 from five bank accounts; \$99,890 seized from the restaurants and Anagnostou's home on March 11, 2010; an additional \$256,696.67, also believed to be proceeds of the crime and payable by check to Immigration and Customs Enforcement upon sentencing; and a 2009 Harley Davidson.

United States Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein commended Assistant United States Attorney Rachel M. Yasser, who is prosecuting the case.

[HOME](#)