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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, April 20, 2017

Two High Point Women Plead Guilty To Fraud

Owner/Operators of Becky's and Mary's Restaurant

Greensboro, N.C. – Acting United States Attorney Sandra Hairston announced today that two High Point, NC women pleaded guilty on a superseding Bill of Information to conspiracy to defraud the United States' Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as the Food Stamp Program.

Ingram and Mary Frances Ingram, both of High Point, NC, pleaded guilty in federal court in Winston-Salem before United States District Judge Thomas D. Schroeder. Sentencing has been set for August 22, 2017, at 2 p.m. Each defendant faces a term of imprisonment of up to five years, and a fine of up to \$250,000.00. The court may also order restitution to victims of the offense.

The Ingrams are sisters who own and operate Becky's and Mary's Restaurant in High Point. The Ingrams used SNAP Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards belonging to other persons at local grocery stores to purchase food for their restaurant. The investigation revealed that between January 2015 and October 2016, the Ingrams, along with others, used more than 180 EBT cards to purchase food for the restaurant. On November 29, 2016, a federal search warrant was executed at the restaurant owned by the Ingrams. During the search, 21 EBT cards and a notebook containing names, card numbers, and PIN numbers were seized. None of the cards belonged to the Ingrams.

"USDA-OIG is dedicated to working with its federal, state, and local partners to investigate schemes that are devised by criminals to defraud our programs and the American taxpayer. These sisters utilized a supplying scheme to traffic in EBT benefits by illegally obtaining recipients' EBT cards and purchasing supplies for their restaurant with those cards. In exchange, EBT recipients were paid a reduced amount



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in cash for use of their cards. The prosecution of these sisters should serve as a strong message that fraud in USDA programs will not be tolerated,” said Karen Citizen-Wilcox, Special Agent-in-Charge for USDA-OIG.

The High Point Police Department and the United States Department of Agriculture, Office of the Inspector General investigated the case. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Anand Ramaswamy.

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