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## News Releases

OCTOBER 28, 2010 BALTIMORE, MD

### **Owner of Timbuktu and By The Docks restaurants sentenced to prison for harboring illegal aliens Forfeited nearly \$750,000 of illegal gains**

BALTIMORE - George Anagnostou, 41, of Kingsville, Md., was sentenced today to four months in prison and four months home detention with electronic monitoring, followed by two years of supervised release, for harboring for private financial gain and commercial advantage at least 24 unauthorized alien employees of Timbuktu and By the Docks restaurants. Anagnostou also forfeited a 2009 Harley Davidson, \$378,386.21 from five bank accounts; \$99,890 seized from the restaurants and Anagnostou's home on March 11, 2010; and at today's sentencing paid an additional \$256,696.67, also believed to be proceeds of the crime. The investigation was led by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Office of Homeland Security Investigations (HSI)

According to his plea agreement, Anagnostou has been the primary owner of Timbuktu Restaurant located at 1726 Dorsey Road in Hanover, Md. 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, Md.

In 1999, 10 illegal workers were arrested during a search at Timbuktu. On April 4, 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. 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, Timbuktu 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.

Anagnostou admitted that over the last five years he 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, ICE HSI special agents executed several search warrants in connection with this investigation, during which time 29 unauthorized aliens were arrested at Timbuktu, By the Docs and residences close to the restaurants.

For the most up-to-date ICE information, [sign up \(http://www.ice.gov/exec/leaving.asp?url=https://service.govdelivery.com/service/multi\\_subscribe.html?code=USDHSICE\)](http://www.ice.gov/exec/leaving.asp?url=https://service.govdelivery.com/service/multi_subscribe.html?code=USDHSICE) for ICE e-mail alerts. You may also visit us on Twitter (<http://www.ice.gov/exec/leaving.asp?url=http://twitter.com/wwwicegov>) and YouTube (<http://www.ice.gov/exec/leaving.asp?url=http://www.youtube.com/wwwicegov>).

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security.

ICE is a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities. For more information, visit [www.ICE.gov](http://www.ICE.gov). To report suspicious activity, call 1-866-347-2423.