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Former Chairman of the Republican Party of Virginia Pleads Guilty and is Sentenced for Wiretapping-Related Violation

Paul J. McNulty, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, announced that Gary Russell Thomson, of Richmond, Virginia, pleaded guilty to one misdemeanor charge of aiding and abetting the unauthorized publication of a wire communication, and was sentenced to two years of supervised probation and a $2000 fine. According to a statement of facts filed with the plea agreement, Thomson was the Chairman of the Republican Party of Virginia (RPV) in March of 2002. One of his subordinates was Edmund A. Matricardi, III, the Executive Director of the RPV. On March 20 and 21, 2002, a Democratic official sent out an announcement by e-mail and fax to "Democratic General Assembly Members." It listed a dial-in telephone number and a participation code, which allowed access to a conference call involving members of the Joint Democratic Caucus. On March 22, 2002, Jane Doe passed on the telephone number and participation code to Matricardi. That afternoon, Matricardi secretly listened to the Democratic conference call for approximately two and one-half hours, recorded it and later reported the contents of the call to others, including Thomson. On March 23, 2002, Matricardi, aided and abetted by Thomson, disclosed the contents of the March 22 intercepted call to a representative of the Attorney General's Office. Mr. McNulty stated: "Our primary goal in the investigation of this entire matter has been to strengthen the safeguards for the privacy of telecommunications. We will continue to pursue this goal." Also announcing the plea are Donald W. Thompson, Jr., Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Richmond Field Division, and Gerald Massengill, Superintendent of the Virginia State Police. The case is being investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Virginia State Police, and prosecuted by David T. Maguire, Assistant United States Attorney and Stephen W. Miller, Managing Assistant United States Attorney. Mr. McNulty also acknowledges the expert assistance of the attorneys in the Computer Crimes and Intellectual Property Section of the U.S. Department of Justice.

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