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ATTORNEY AND HIS WIFE PLEAD GUILTY TO WELFARE FRAUD

On Monday, May 9, 2011, 50 year-old attorney Todd Rowland Phillippi, and his wife, Melissa Rios AKA: Melissa Phillippi, 40 years-old, both of Midlothian, pleaded guilty to felony charges of welfare fraud. Todd Phillippi pleaded guilty to two counts of Tampering With a Governmental Record. In pleading guilty Phillippi judicially confessed to defrauding the State of Texas by falsifying documents submitted to the Department of Health and Human Services. He was sentenced to 180 days in the State Jail.

In January an Ellis County jury convicted Mr. Phillippi of Fraudulent Use of Identifying Information, also a felony offense. Mr. Phillippi then filed paperwork to appeal that conviction. As part of Monday's plea bargain agreement with the State, Mr. Phillippi withdrew his appeal of the January conviction. Mr. Phillippi was then sentenced to 180 days in the State Jail, to be served concurrently with the sentence in the Tampering charge. He waived his right to all appeals in both cases.

Mrs. Phillippi pleaded guilty to a total of eight counts of Tampering With a Governmental Record. Four counts stem from her fraudulent welfare applications with the State of Texas. Four stem from fraudulent student loan applications submitted to the United States Department of Education. In pleading guilty Mrs. Phillippi judicially confessed to committing all charged offenses. Adjudication of guilt was deferred and Mrs. Phillippi was placed on community supervision for five (5) years.

The total amount of the frauds charged against Mr. and Mrs. Phillippi was close to \$40,000. As part of the plea bargain agreement half of that restitution was paid by the Phillippis prior to their

pleas. The remainder will be paid by Mrs. Phillippi as a condition of her community supervision. That restitution will be forwarded to the Texas Department of Health and Human Services, the Texas Workforce Commission and the United States Department of Education.

Patrick Wilson, Ellis County and District Attorney, made the following statement: “There was overwhelming evidence of an elaborate scheme by Todd and Melissa Phillippi to defraud governmental entities. The agreement reached allows the State to return stolen money where it belongs – to the tax payers. Justice has been served.”



Todd Phillippi



Melissa Phillippi