



# PRESS RELEASE

## Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation *Chief Richard Weber*

Date: Nov. 5, 2015

Contact: \*CI-HQ-COMMUNICATIONSEDUCATION@ci.irs.gov  
IRS – Criminal Investigation

CI Release #: CI-2015-11-05-A

### **Woman Who Held Disabled Adults Captive in Subhuman Conditions Sentenced to Life Plus 80 Years in Prison**

Linda Weston, 55, of Philadelphia, was sentenced today to life plus 80 years in prison. Weston pleaded guilty on Sept. 15, 2015, to all charges in a racketeering and hate crimes case that involved holding disabled adults captive in locked closets, basements and attics in Philadelphia's Tacony section and in other states.

Weston pleaded guilty to racketeering conspiracy, kidnapping resulting in the death of the victim, forced human labor, involuntary servitude, multiple counts of murder in aid of racketeering, hate crime, violent crime in aid of racketeering, sex trafficking, kidnapping, theft of government funds, wire fraud, mail fraud, use of a firearm in furtherance of a violent crime and false statements. In addition to the prison term, U.S. District Court Judge Cynthia M. Rufe of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania ordered restitution of \$273,463 to the Social Security Administration and a \$19,600 special assessment.

From approximately 2001 through October 2011, Weston and her co-conspirators lured mentally handicapped individuals into locations rented by Weston, Jean McIntosh, Eddie Wright and others in Philadelphia; Killeen, Texas; Norfolk, Virginia; and West Palm Beach, Florida. The group targeted mentally challenged individuals who were estranged from their families. Once Weston convinced them to move in, she became their representative payee with social security and began to receive their disability benefits and in some instances, their state benefits. On one occasion, Weston and one of her co-defendants took the social security and identification documents from a victim by force and then used the funds for her own and family purposes.

Weston, Jean McIntosh, Eddie Wright and others confined their victims to locked rooms, basements, closets, attics and apartments. While confined, the captives were often isolated in the dark and sedated with drugs that Weston and other defendants placed in their food and drink. When the individuals tried to escape, stole food or otherwise protested their treatment, Weston and others punished them by slapping, punching, kicking, stabbing, burning and hitting them with closed hands, belts, sticks, bats and hammers or other objects, including the butt of a pistol. Some victims endured the abuse for years, until Oct. 15, 2011, when Philadelphia Police Department officers rescued them from the sub-basement of an apartment building in the Tacony section. The enterprise victimized six disabled adults and four children.

In April 2005, Weston and a co-defendant targeted victim D.S. They brought D.S. to a home at 2211 Glenview Avenue in Philadelphia. D.S. was kept in the basement with the other victims, fed a substandard diet and not allowed to use the bathroom. On June 26, 2005, D.S. was found dead in the basement. Weston ordered other members of the household to move D.S.'s body to a different location before calling law enforcement.

In 2008, victim M.L. was living with the family. M.L. was beaten when she tried to escape or when she begged for food and never received medical attention for any of her injuries. After Weston moved the enterprise to Virginia in 2008, Weston confined M.L. inside a kitchen cabinet and an attic for several months. M.L. subsequently died of bacterial meningitis and starvation in November 2008. Weston ordered other members of the household to move M.L.'s body to a bedroom and stage the scene before calling law enforcement. The next day the family left for Philadelphia.

Weston's daughter, Jean McIntosh, and co-defendant Eddie Wright have already pleaded guilty. Co-defendants Gregory Thomas Sr. and Nicklaus Woodard are awaiting trial.

The case was investigated by the FBI, the Social Security Administration Office of Inspector General, Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigations, the Philadelphia Police Department and the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office with assistance from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives' West Palm Beach Field Office. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Richard P. Barrett and Faithe Moore Taylor of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

# # #