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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **Beverly Hills Man Pleads Guilty to Charge for Using Fake Companies in Scheme to Steal Millions of Dollars in COVID Small Business Loans**

*LOS ANGELES* – A Beverly Hills man – whose sons pleaded guilty earlier this month to felonies for defrauding COVID-relief programs – pleaded guilty today to a federal criminal charge for fraudulently seeking more than \$6.7 million in COVID-related small business loans for more than half a dozen fake companies.

Ramiro Da Rosa Mendes, 61, pleaded guilty to one count of wire fraud.

According to his plea agreement, from April 2020 to August 2020, Mendes schemed to fraudulently obtain federal disaster relief funds distributed through the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) programs that were intended to help small businesses through the economic shock of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mendes claimed to own numerous fake businesses purportedly based in Beverly Hills, including One Wilshire Enterprises, Professional Music Services, and MB Property Management Group LLC. These companies were fake businesses that did not exist prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and did not have any operations or employees.

Mendes also claimed to be the owner of fake real estate services companies, including Ramiro Mendes Real Estate Services, Real Estate Services, and Real Estate Investments, also located in Beverly Hills and Massachusetts, as well as other businesses registered in Wyoming.

In his plea agreement, Mendes admitted to submitting 19 applications for PPP and EIDL loans that contained false and fraudulent information, including the purported existence of payroll expenses, phony tax forms, and the operational status of the businesses.

For example, on June 24, 2020, Mendes submitted a fraudulent PPP loan application to a Florida-based bank, seeking a loan of \$975,100. The loan application falsely stated that One Wilshire Enterprises employed 18 people, had an average monthly payroll of \$390,040, and, according to a false tax form, earned \$4,810,149 in revenue in 2019. Based on this false information, the bank approved and funded a PPP loan in the amount of \$793,300. The loan amount was wired into a bank account Mendes controlled.

Mendes admitted in his plea agreement to stealing the COVID-relief loans and misusing the proceeds for his own personal benefit, including the purchase of cryptocurrency. He further admitted that the

intended loss in this case was approximately \$6,708,963 and the actual loss was at least approximately \$2,228,302.

United States District Judge Percy Anderson scheduled a December 12 sentencing hearing, at which time Mendes will face a statutory maximum sentence of 20 years in federal prison.

In related cases, Mendes' sons – Ammon Jose de Pina Mendes, 26, of Beverly Hills, and Mateus Pina Mendes, 33, of Los Angeles – each pleaded guilty on September 1 to one count of wire fraud. Using the names of fake businesses, Ammon and Mateus Mendes fraudulently obtained approximately \$222,225 and \$143,283, respectively, in PPP and EIDL loans. Their sentencing hearings are scheduled for November 29, at which time each defendant will face up to 20 years in federal prison.

This matter was investigated by the FBI; the Federal Housing Finance Agency – Office of the Inspector General; the United States Postal Inspection Service; the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation – Office of the Inspector General; the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration – Office of the Inspector General; IRS Criminal Investigation; and the Small Business Administration – Office of the Inspector General.

Assistant United States Attorney Scott Paetty of the Major Frauds Section and Trial Attorney Jennifer Bilinkas of the Justice Department's Fraud Section are prosecuting this case.

Anyone with information about allegations of attempted fraud involving COVID-19 can report it by calling the Department of Justice's National Center for Disaster Fraud Hotline at (866) 720-5721 or via the NCDF Web Complaint Form at: <https://www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form>.

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