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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Beverly Hills Father and Son Sentenced to Prison for Scheming to Defraud COVID-Relief Programs Designed to Help Businesses

LOS ANGELES – A Beverly Hills father and son were sentenced today to federal prison terms for defrauding government programs designed to help businesses survive the economic shock of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ramiro Da Rosa Mendes, 61, was sentenced to 41 months in federal prison by United States District Judge Percy Anderson, who also ordered him to pay \$2,228,302 in restitution.

In a separate case, Judge Anderson today sentenced Ammon Jose de Pina Mendes, 27, Ramiro's son, to 21 months in federal prison and ordered him to pay \$222,225 in restitution.

Ramiro and Ammon Mendes each pleaded guilty to one count of wire fraud in September 2022.

From April 2020 to August 2020, Ramiro 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 businesses during the pandemic.

Ramiro 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.

He 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.

Ramiro Mendes submitted 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, Ramiro 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.

Ramiro Mendes stole the COVID-relief loans and misused 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.

Ammon Mendes admitted he used information from fake businesses to fraudulently obtain \$225,225 in PPP and EIDL loans.

Another son of Ramiro Mendes – Mateus Pina Mendes, 33, of downtown Los Angeles – also previously pleaded guilty in September to wire fraud and admitted fraudulently obtaining \$143,283 in PPP and EIDL loans. Mateus Mendes is scheduled to be sentenced on January 10, 2023.

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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