Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (202) 514-2007
WWW.JUSTICE.GOV TTY (866) 544-5309

Friday, February 15, 2013

Florida Woman Sentenced to Prison for Obstruction of Justice in Relation to Her Husband's Disappearance

A Gainesville, Fla., woman was sentenced today to serve one year and one day in prison for her role in the obstruction of a multinational investigation into the disappearance of her husband, then an employee in the U.S. Consulate in Curacao, announced Assistant Attorney General Lanny A. Breuer of the Criminal Division, U.S. Attorney Pamela C. Marsh for the Northern District of Florida, Director of the U.S. State Department's Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) Gregory B. Starr and Special Agent in Charge of the FBI's Miami Field Office Michael B. Steinbach.

Abby Beard Hogan, 50, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge M. Casey Rodgers in the Northern District of Florida. In addition to her prison term, Hogan was sentenced to two years of supervised release. On March 29, 2012, Hogan pleaded guilty before U.S. Magistrate Judge Gary R. Jones to one count of obstruction of justice.

According to court documents, on the night of Sept. 24, 2009, Abby Hogan's husband, James Hogan, an employee at the U.S. Consulate in Curacao, a Caribbean island that was part of the Netherlands Antilles, left his home on foot and subsequently disappeared. In the early hours of Sept. 25, 2009, James Hogan called his wife and spoke for approximately three minutes. The next day, when James Hogan failed to report to work, the U.S. government and Dutch and Antillean law enforcement launched an island-wide search and opened an investigation into Hogan's disappearance. On Sept. 25, 2009, a diver located James Hogan's blood-stained clothing on a local beach.

According to evidence submitted in Abby Hogan's sentencing hearing, she repeatedly provided false information to U.S. law enforcement about the time period before James Hogan's disappearance and withheld relevant information. Abby Hogan initially told investigators that, before his disappearance, she and her husband had an argument. She subsequently modified that statement and claimed that there had been no argument, just a minor disagreement over her husband's next assignment for the State Department. Abby Hogan further told U.S. law enforcement agents that James Hogan had been in a "good mood" prior to leaving for his walk on the evening of his disappearance. She repeatedly denied that there had been any marital problems or that her husband had been upset or depressed in any way. Abby Hogan further stated that she could not remember the full three-minute conversation before her husband disappeared because she was sound asleep when her husband called. She claimed she fell back asleep after the call, and did not awake until the following morning. In fact, all of these

statements were false, as established by the deleted emails and other computer forensic evidence, which was submitted to the court.

According to court documents, after law enforcement interviews, between Sept. 30, 2009, and Jan. 15, 2010, Abby Hogan deleted more than 300 emails from her email account. These emails contained information that Abby Hogan knew was relevant to specific questions she had been asked by U.S. law enforcement. The emails also contained information that she had either previously misrepresented or knowingly omitted during her interviews with law enforcement, including that she was engaged in an extramarital affair; the night James Hogan disappeared, the couple had argued, and he left the house angry and upset; and that she did not want law enforcement to know what had happened that evening.

The case was prosecuted by Senior Trial Attorney Teresa Wallbaum of the Criminal Division's Human Rights and Special Prosecutions Section and Assistant U.S. Attorney Frank Williams for the Northern District of Florida. The Criminal Division's Office of International Affairs provided assistance. The case was investigated by DSS and the FBI's Miami Field Office and Legal Attaché Office in Bridgetown, Barbados. Assistance was also provided by Curacao law enforcement authorities.

# # #