



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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MAN INDICTED ON FEDERAL CHARGE OF PRODUCT TAMPERING REGARDING BABY FOOD JAR HOAX

TUCSON, Ariz. - The U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Arizona announced that on September 8, 2004, Michael P. McLaughlin, DOB 5/28/56, was indicted by a federal grand jury in Tucson, Ariz. of communicating false information regarding tampering with a consumer product.

McLaughlin was indicted on one count of Tampering with a Consumer Product in violation of Title 18, U.S. Code, Section 1365(c). On August 4, 2004, a woman in La Jolla, Calif. called the San Diego Police Department to report that her brother, Michael P. McLaughlin, had informed her by telephone that he had just returned from the Tucson, Ariz. area where he had tainted baby food jars with rat poison at a Basha's store in Tucson, Ariz. The woman reported that she believed he was capable of such act because of the specificity he gave regarding the tainting. Police officers in Tucson, Ariz. were contacted as well as management at the Basha's Supermarkets in Tucson, Ariz.

Questioning of McLaughlin revealed that he had made up the story so as to get attention from his sister. The grocery store chain in Tucson, Ariz. was significantly inconvenienced by recalling all baby food products in order to avert any potential poisoning/injury.

An indictment is simply the method by which a person is charged with criminal activity and raises no inference of guilt. An individual is presumed innocent until competent evidence is presented to a jury that establishes guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

A conviction for Tampering with a Consumer Product carries a maximum penalty of five years, a \$250,000 fine or both.

The investigation in this case was conducted by the FBI, the Tucson Police Department and the San Diego Police Department.

The prosecution is being handled by Raquel Arellano, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson, Ariz.

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