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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**SEVERN MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO FRAUDULENT SCHEME
TO OBTAIN SOCIAL SECURITY CARDS**

GREENBELT, Maryland - Thomas M. DiBiagio, United States Attorney for the District of Maryland, announced today that Orphee Rekoula, age 33, of Severn, Maryland pled guilty today to bribery and conspiracy to provide false information to the Commissioner of the Social Security Administration.

In a statement of facts provided to the court as part of the plea agreement, Rekoula admitted that on January 29, 2003 he and a Social Security Administration employee were parked in a lot located at 11160 Viers Mill Road, Wheaton, Maryland, where an office of the Social Security Administration is located. He was approached by two undercover Montgomery County police officers and consented to a search of his vehicle. The officers found 10 completed SS-5 social security card applications and 24 Social Security Administration receipts for social security card applications. Rekoula and the Social Security Administration employee both admitted that they schemed to obtain social security cards and numbers for persons who otherwise would not qualify for the issuance of a social security card. The scheme involved Rekoula paying the Social Security

Administration employee \$200 for each social security card application he submitted. After receiving the social security card application, the Social Security Administration employee would enter the information into the Social Security Administration's computer database. The computer would then generate a receipt indicating that an application had been accepted and that a social security number would be generated for the applicant within two weeks. During the course of the scheme, Rekoula submitted 30 to 40 SS-5 applications to the Social Security Administration. Rekoula further advised that another individual gave him \$400 for each application submitted to the Social Security Administration employee and that he gave \$200 to the employee and he kept the remaining \$200. Each of the SS-5 applications found in Rekoula's car falsely indicated that the applicant was a legal alien allowed to work in the United States.

Rekoula faces a maximum sentence of 15 years imprisonment and a fine in an amount three times the value of the bribe or \$250,000, whichever is greater. Rekoula also faces a maximum sentence for the bribery charge of 5 years imprisonment and a fine of \$250,000. United States District Judge Peter J. Messitte has scheduled sentencing for July 31, 2003 at 9:30 a.m. Rekoula has been in custody since the indictment was returned on April 17, 2003.

The case is a result of an investigation by the Social Security Administration, Office of Inspector General and is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Bryan E. Foreman.