



# Department of Justice

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Western District of Tennessee

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## **SOVEREIGN CITIZEN DEVITOE FARMER PLEADS GUILTY TO THEFT OF GOVERNMENT PROPERTY IN RENTAL HOME SCAM**

***Memphis, TN*** – Devitoe Farmer, 46, of Memphis, TN, pleaded guilty yesterday to three counts of theft of government property, announced U.S. Attorney Edward L. Stanton III and Acting Special Agent in Charge Robert Anderson of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Inspector General (HUD-OIG).

“In the Mid-South, we have witnessed first-hand the potential threat posed by those claiming to be sovereign citizens,” said U.S. Attorney Stanton. “Thanks to the hard work of our law enforcement partners, who worked diligently to bring this individual to justice, we are serving notice to anyone who chooses to defy the law for your own selfish gain that, ultimately, you will face serious consequences for your conduct.”

According to an indictment filed on March 21, 2012, and facts of the case revealed during the plea hearing, Farmer took possession of three HUD-owned properties in the city of Memphis during February and April of 2011. His scheme was discovered when employees with a property management firm contracted by HUD to care for the properties discovered that Farmer had filed quit claim deeds to himself with the Shelby County Register of Deeds Office on the properties and placed tenants in them. HUD-contracted real estate agents also noticed that “for sale” signs had been removed from the properties and that locks had been changed.

One of the properties was rented to an individual, who supplied investigators with copies of the lease agreement made with Farmer. Another property was occupied by a relative of Farmer. When asked by Memphis Police Department officers for proof of his ownership of the properties, Farmer presented documents declaring that he was a sovereign citizen.

The combined value of the properties listed in the indictment was \$172,000. Farmer will be sentenced by U.S. District Judge S. Thomas Anderson on August 13, 2013, at 1:30 p.m. He faces up to 10 years in prison and fines of up to \$250,000 for each count. There is no parole in the federal system.

“Devitoe Farmer’s guilty plea should send a strong message that the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Inspector General will aggressively investigate those

who fail to exercise integrity in connection with HUD programs,” said Acting Special Agent in Charge Anderson of HUD-OIG.

This case was investigated by HUD-OIG and the Memphis Police Department. Assistant U.S. Attorney Brian K. Coleman represented the government.

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