

United States Department of Justice

For Immediate Release

August 2, 2010 **United States Attorney's Office**
Central District of California

Woman Who Staged Fake Funerals as Part of Life Insurance Scam Found Guilty of Federal Fraud Charges

LOS ANGELES—A federal jury has convicted the last defendant indicted in relation to an insurance fraud ring that staged funerals and sought payouts against life insurance policies held by “deceased” individuals. Jean Crump, 67, of South Los Angeles, was found guilty late Friday of two counts of wire fraud and one count of mail fraud, charges that cumulatively carry a statutory maximum sentence of 90 years in prison.

Crump, who worked at the now-defunct Simpson and McGee Mortuary in Lynwood, participated in a scheme to defraud insurance companies by filing fraudulent claims against \$1.2 million in life insurance policies for an individual who had not died as claimed. As part of the scheme, Crump and her accomplices caused bogus death certificates to be prepared, purchased a burial plot, buried an empty casket, and staged a phony funeral to lend credibility to the scheme. After two insurance companies began investigating the claims, Crump and her accomplices exhumed the casket, filled it with a mannequin and cow parts, and had the casket cremated. Crump and her accomplices filed false documents with the County of Los Angeles stating that the remains were cremated and scattered at sea, even though no corpse existed. Crump offered a medical doctor \$50,000 to create medical records supporting the fake death certificate.

Crump and her accomplices also defrauded several companies that advance cash to cover funeral expenses in exchange for a portion of the decedent’s life insurance policies. They prepared four fake invoices claiming that the phony funeral was held at three different mortuaries, and two companies advanced costs to cover the phony funeral.

The jury in the case was unable to reach a verdict on two mail fraud charges related to a \$50,000 life insurance policy for a woman who had died in 2004. Crump is scheduled to be sentenced by United States District Judge Dean D. Pregerson on November 29.

Faye Shilling, 61, of Hawthorne, who was scheduled to go to trial with Crump, pleaded guilty to two counts of wire fraud shortly before the trial. Shilling also is scheduled to be sentenced by Judge Pregerson on November 29.

Barbara Ann Lynn, 64, of Los Angeles, previously pleaded guilty in relation to the scheme and was sentenced to serve one year of home detention as part of a three-year period of probation. The fourth defendant in the case, Lydia Eileen Pearce, 35, of Signal Hill, pleaded guilty and will be sentenced on November 8.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.