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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: August 16, 2013
Re: People v. Jason A. Grillo
Stanislaus County Case 1458528

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Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Jason Anthony Grillo, age 31, of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, was convicted following a jury trial on July 24, 2013 of two felonies: Diversion of Construction Funds and Grand Theft. Deputy District Attorney John Goulart prosecuted the case for the People.

Utilizing a website under the business name "JOGO Equipment," a DBA ("doing business as") which Grillo created and recorded in Clark County, Nevada and, using the false name "Paul Thomas," Grillo convinced representatives from Modesto Christian School (MCS) that JOGO Equipment was an actual company capable of building, delivering and installing stadium seating for their football field. The website Grillo utilized to commit fraud was designed professionally with great attention to detail. It contained brightly colored graphics, several links, photos and language that would lead anyone reading it to believe that JOGO Equipment was in fact a real construction company.

After formalizing an agreement for construction, delivery and erection of the stadium bleachers for the price of \$49,533 for materials and an additional \$12,200 for labor, Grillo sent an invoice to MCS asking for payment of the \$49,533 portion of the project and asked that the payment be sent to Accounts Receivable for JOGO Equipment at an address in Olmsted Falls, Ohio. MCS then sent a check to the stated address unaware that the address was actually Grillo's mother's apartment. Grillo thereafter did no work on the project and delivered nothing to MCS. Eventually, Grillo stopped responding to all of MCS's phone calls and emails, causing MCS to make a report to law enforcement.

Detective Cody Williams of the Stanislaus County Sheriff's Office was assigned to investigate the case. His investigation revealed that the Vallejo, California address listed for JOGO Equipment's headquarters online did not exist. By the use of a search warrant, copies of Grillo's bank account records, including a business account for Jason Grillo, dba, JOGO Equipment, and a personal checking account in Grillo's name, were obtained. Grillo's bank statements show that he deposited into his business account the check for \$49,533 on the day he received it from MCS. In the days that followed, he rapidly transferred all of the funds into

his personal checking account. He then went to Las Vegas, Nevada and, in the span of about five days, spent all of MCS's money at Caesars Palace. After examining Grillo's bank records, determining that JOGO Equipment was a sham company, and that Grillo was a con-artist who had stolen MCS's money, Det. Williams then sought and obtained an arrest warrant for Grillo.

Grillo was subsequently arrested when he happened to fly into San Diego Airport to visit one of his girlfriends. At the airport, U.S. Marshalls identified Grillo and held him on the warrant until Stanislaus County Sheriff's personnel could transport him to Stanislaus County for prosecution. Once Grillo was in Modesto, he agreed to be interviewed by Det. Williams. After telling multiple lies and avoiding direct questions, Grillo ultimately admitted that JOGO Equipment was just him. He said that he had to do whatever it takes to get back to where he was before the financial crash of 2008. He believed that gambling would be a way to do that.

At trial, Grillo testified that he has used multiple DBAs in addition to "JOGO Equipment", including "JAG at Wilmington", "Cutting Edge", "Milano Group", and "Planet Safety". He testified that he has spent his whole life in the construction industry and mentioned that he has done roofing, siding, and concrete work. However, on cross-examination, this self-professed lifelong "contractor" could not identify the true dimensions of a two by four piece of lumber and had no idea how many yards of concrete a typical concrete transport truck can carry. Grillo is not now nor has he ever been a licensed contractor in the State of California. Although he testified under oath that he was previously licensed as a contractor in Ohio, Florida and North Carolina, representatives from each of these states has now provided written verification that Grillo has never been licensed in their states, either.

On August 16, 2013, the Honorable Dawna Frenchie Reeves, Judge of the Superior Court, sentenced Grillo to two years in prison which he will serve in the Stanislaus County Jail, not State Prison, due to the Realignment laws enacted in 2011. He was ordered to pay restitution to MCS in the amount of \$50,533, to pay a restitution fund fine to the State of California in the amount of \$560, and to pay attorney fees for his court appointed lawyer in the amount of \$500. The State of Florida has a hold placed on Grillo and authorities there are expected to extradite him to answer to charges in Florida similar to those he faced here.

Consumers should be wary of entering into construction contracts worth \$500 or more without first checking with the California Contractors State License Board to see if the person or entity with whom they are dealing is in fact a licensed contractor. Licensed contractors are required to be bonded and insured and, to become licensed, must have journeyman level experience, must pass a background check, and must pass an exam testing his or her knowledge of the law and the trade in which he or she seeks to work. All of these things help to protect consumers.

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