

Iowa Slaughterhouse Exec On Trial In SD

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SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The first trial for a former manager of an Iowa kosher slaughterhouse that was the site of a massive immigration raid gets under way Tuesday in South Dakota.

Sholom Rubashkin's trials were moved from Cedar Rapids, Iowa, to Sioux Falls, S.D., after a federal judge ruled last month that a "prodigious" amount of negative pretrial publicity caused potential jurors to develop a bias against Rubashkin and Agriprocessors, Inc.

The Agriprocessors slaughterhouse in Postville, Iowa, was raided in May 2008 and 389 illegal immigrants were found working in the plant.

A series of federal indictments laid out 163 charges against Rubashkin. The charges have been split into two trials, the first dealing with 91 financial charges and the second concerning 72 immigration charges.

Jury selection begins Tuesday in the first trial, during which the government will try to prove Rubashkin directed employees to create invoices and bills for sales that never happened, thereby inflating sales figures in Agriprocessors' accounting system and allowing the company to borrow against an artificial base.

Prosecutors also have accused Rubashkin of laundering more than \$1 million and failing to pay livestock providers on time. He faces charges of bank fraud, giving false financial statements and mail and wire fraud.

The case hinges on the government's ability to prove, among other things, that Rubashkin intended to defraud the bank that made loans to Agriprocessors and that he profited from the proceeds of illegal transactions. His attorney has said Rubashkin considers the indictments "continued overreaching by the government" that began with the raid.

The trial is expected to last between four and six weeks.

Rubashkin has been under supervised release since February. He had spent more than three months in jail after a magistrate judge ruled he was a flight risk.

The plant was sold this summer to a newly formed company owned by a Canadian plastics manufacturer.

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