



U.S. Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

**FORMER PROCUREMENT DIRECTOR OF STATEN ISLAND DISTRICT
ATTORNEY'S OFFICE PLEADS GUILTY TO EMBEZZLING GOVERNMENT FUNDS**

***Defendant Fraudulently Purchased Personal Items in Scheme to Defraud the District
Attorney's Office of Over \$440,000***

Earlier today, at the federal courthouse in Brooklyn, William Nelson, former Director of Procurement at the Richmond County District Attorney's Office (RCDA), pleaded guilty to theft of government funds relating to his embezzlement of over \$440,000 from the RCDA. The plea was entered before United States Magistrate Judge Cheryl L. Pollak.

Richard P. Donoghue, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, William F. Sweeney, Jr., Assistant Director-in-Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, New York Field Office, and Mark G. Peters, Commissioner, New York City Department of Investigation, announced the guilty plea.

According to the indictment and facts presented during the guilty plea, for approximately 10 years between 2006 and 2016, Nelson stole over \$440,000 from the RCDA as part of a long-term scheme to defraud the RCDA of funds. Specifically, Nelson used two RCDA American Express credit cards to purchase items such as jewelry, clothing, toys, sporting goods and memorabilia, alcohol, video games and movies, electronics, knives, handbags, collectibles, event tickets, meals, lodging, airfare, excursions, and online services that he then used for his own benefit and the benefit of others. Nelson also used the online payment system PayPal to directly transfer thousands of dollars from the RCDA credit cards to his own personal bank account. In furtherance of his scheme, Nelson took steps to hide his embezzlement, which included concealing the itemized credit card statements, mischaracterizing the nature of the purchases, and using his authority as Director of Procurement to approve payments of his fraudulent personal expenditures.

As part of his plea agreement, Nelson is required to pay forfeiture in the amount of \$441,262.30, as well as restitution in the same amount to the RCDA. When sentenced, the defendant faces up to 10 years' imprisonment.

The government's case is being handled by the Office's Public Integrity Section. Assistant United States Attorney Maria Cruz Melendez is in charge of the prosecution.

The Defendant:

WILLIAM NELSON

Age: 44

Staten Island, New York

E.D.N.Y. Docket No. 17-CR-394 (RJD)