



PRESS NOTICE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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SUMMERVILLE WOMAN PLEADS GUILTY TO ILLEGALLY ACCESSING CONFIDENTIAL PASSPORT FILES

Columbia, South Carolina ---- United States Attorney W. Walter Wilkins stated that Yvette M. Burrison, 46, of Summerville, South Carolina, pled guilty yesterday before United States Magistrate Judge Robert S. Carr to illegally exceeding her authorized access to a government computer. A sentencing hearing will be scheduled at a later date.

According to court documents and statements made during the guilty plea hearing, Burrison was employed at the State Department's Charleston Passport Center from January 2003 to September 2006. During that period she had access to official State Department computer databases, including the Passport Information Electronic Records System (PIERS), which contains all imaged

passport applications dating back to 1994. The imaged passport applications on PIERS contain, among other things, a photograph of the passport applicant as well as certain personal information including the applicant's full name, date and place of birth, current address, telephone numbers, parent information, spouse's name, and emergency contact information. These confidential files are protected by the Privacy Act of 1974, and access by State Department employees is strictly limited to official government duties.

In pleading guilty, Burrison admitted that between January 2003 and September 2006, she logged onto the PIERS database a total of 179 times and viewed the passport applications of 98 individuals, including celebrities, actors, musicians, comedians, models, and athletes. Burrison admitted that she had no official government reason to access and view these passport applications, but that her sole purpose in accessing and viewing these passport applications was idle curiosity.

Burrison is currently on leave without pay.

Burrison is the seventh current or former State Department employee across the country to be prosecuted for unauthorized access to these files.

The maximum penalty Burrison could receive is a imprisonment for one year and a \$100,000 fine.

Mr. Wilkins stated that the case was investigated by agents of the State Department, Office of Inspector General. Assistant United States Attorney Dean H. Secor of the Charleston Office prosecuted the case, with the assistance of

Trial Attorney Armando O. Bonilla of the Department of Justice's Criminal
Division, Public Integrity Section.

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