



Department of Justice

UNITED STATES ATTORNEY SALLY QUILLIAN YATES
Northern District of Georgia

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CONTACT: Patrick Crosby
(404)581-6016
FAX (404)581-6160

ATLANTA ATTORNEY ADMITS TO STEALING OVER A HALF MILLION DOLLARS FROM HIS LAW FIRM

ATLANTA, GA - MICHAEL SHAW, 37, of Mableton, Georgia, pleaded guilty today to federal charges related to a scheme to steal over \$500,000 from an Atlanta law firm.

United States Attorney Sally Quillian Yates said, "As a lawyer, Shaw had a duty to act with his clients' best interests in mind. Instead, he used his position at the law firm to enrich himself at their expense. In the end, he lost his license to practice law and now faces federal prison."

According to United States Attorney Yates, the charges and other information presented in court: SHAW was employed as an associate attorney at a large Atlanta law firm, specializing in bankruptcy and commercial-foreclosure litigation. From 2003 to 2009, SHAW regularly performed investigative services for clients himself, but submitted invoices in the name of an investigator who also worked for the firm. These invoices totaled approximately \$90,000. At the same time, SHAW performed title-examination services for clients himself, but submitted invoices to the firm in the name of a fictitious vendor. He obtained the vendor's social security number from federal bankruptcy filings and submitted fraudulent W-9 forms in the vendor's name. These invoices totaled approximately \$425,000. For almost six years, SHAW regularly performed work for clients, submitted fraudulent invoices to the firm's accounting department, received checks, endorsed the checks over to himself, and deposited the funds into his personal checking account. During this period, he also continued to receive his regular law firm salary as well.

In June 2009, a client's billing review caused the law firm to discover SHAW's misconduct, and he was terminated. SHAW, a member of the Georgia Bar from 1999 to 2010, was also disbarred by the Georgia State Bar.

SHAW could receive a maximum sentence of 30 years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000. In determining the actual sentence, the Court will consider the United States Sentencing Guidelines, which are not binding but provide appropriate sentencing ranges for most offenders.

Sentencing is scheduled for January 5, 2011, at 10 a.m. before United States District Judge Willis B. Hunt.

This case is being investigated by Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Assistant United States Attorney Kurt R. Erskine is prosecuting the case.

For further information please contact Sally Q. Yates, United States Attorney, or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is www.justice.gov/usao/gan.