

NEWS

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Seventh Defendant In Government Property Theft Ring Sentenced To 8 Months In Federal Prison

(More)

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CAMDEN – A former employee of a contractor working at a U.S. General Services Administration’s distribution center in Burlington was sentenced today to eight months in federal prison for stealing government property valued at more than \$300,000, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

U.S. District Judge Jerome B. Simandle also ordered Dwight Hudson, 34, of Willingboro, to pay \$54,200 in restitution and fines and to serve three years of supervised release upon the completion of his prison sentence.

Hudson was the last of seven defendants to be sentenced in the scheme to steal government property at the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) warehouse. Six of the seven defendants worked for a private company that contracted with the United States to perform packaging and distribution services at the GSA’s Eastern Distribution Center (EDC) in Burlington. The EDC includes a warehouse where numerous products are stored prior to distribution to the U.S. military and other agencies.

In July 2006, Joseph Trofa of Florence, Jermaine Cooper of Philadelphia, and Frank Nelson of Bordentown were indicted in connection with the scheme. John Braun of Bordentown, Kevin Potter of Blackwood, Jason Ruffin of Philadelphia and Hudson were charged separately. All of the defendants entered guilty pleas before Judge Simandle. The prison terms in their sentences ranged from six months to 12 months, and the restitution ranged from approximately \$54,000 to \$311,000.

At their plea hearings, the defendants admitted that between December 2000 and March 2003 they stole knives, tools and other property from the EDC and sold the items to other distributors or consumers. Some of the items were sold through eBay.com and a pawn shop in Philadelphia.

In determining the actual sentences, Judge Simandle consulted the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges that take into account the severity and characteristics of the offense, the defendants' criminal history, if any, and other factors. The judge, however, was not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence. Parole has been abolished in the federal system. Defendants who are given custodial terms must serve nearly all that time.

Christie credited Special Agents of the GSA Office of Inspector General, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Randal A. Stewart in Washington, D.C., and Special Agent in Charge Daniel J. Walsh in New York, with the investigation which led to the convictions.

The government is represented by Assistant United States Attorney Ronald Chillemi of the Criminal Division in Camden.

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Defense Attorneys:

Braun - John Holliday, Esq., Hamilton
Cooper - John F. Renner, Esq., Marlton
Hudson - Roland Jarvis, Esq., Philadelphia
Nelson - David S. Rudenstein, Esq., Merchantville
Potter - Troy Archie, Esq., Camden
Ruffin - Christopher O'Malley, Esq., Camden
Trofa - Martin I. Isenberg, Esq., Gibbsboro