



## U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney*

*Eastern District of Pennsylvania*

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*615 Chestnut Street  
Suite 1250  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106-4476  
(215) 861-8200*

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### NEW JERSEY WOMAN SENTENCED FOR EMBEZZLING GOVERNMENT FUNDS

PHILADELPHIA - Serena Thomas-Erby, 53, of Pennsauken, NJ, was sentenced today to 30 months in prison for conspiring to embezzle more than \$400,000 from the Naval Inactive Ships Maintenance Office ("NISMO"), announced United States Attorney Zane David Memeger. Thomas-Erby pleaded guilty to the two counts in September. She and co-conspirator Marian Murphy, who is scheduled for sentencing later this month, created fraudulent travel and other expense documentation to be submitted for reimbursement to the Defense Finance and Accounting Service ("DFAS") in Columbus, Ohio between 2000 and 2007. Their fraud resulted in a loss to Naval Inactive Ships Maintenance Office and their employer, Global Associates of at least \$431,181.

Global Associates, Ltd. contracted with the United States Naval Inactive Ships Maintenance Office ("NISMO") to maintain inactive vessels at the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard and elsewhere. In the performance of its duties, Global submitted claims to the United States for reimbursement of all of its contractual costs and expenses, including travel expenses. Defendant Serena Thomas-Erby was a budget analyst in the finance department, and she worked with co-defendant Marian Murphy, the computer operator in the finance department. In one aspect of the scheme, the defendants submitted inflated travel advance authorization requests made to Global causing Global to wire money to its bank account in Philadelphia, where co-defendant Murphy would withdraw the money as cash. She would distribute cash to employees as an advance on their legitimate travel expenses, and divide the fraudulent overage with defendant Thomas-Erby. The fraudulent travel expenses were included in vouchers prepared by Thomas-Erby, with the assistance of Murphy, and transmitted by mail and/or wire to the Defense Finance and Accounting Service ("DFAS"). Relying on the vouchers, DFAS paid Global for the fraudulent travel expenses. In another aspect of the scheme, the defendants created fictitious documentation to make it look as though there were accounts payable, and used the Global checks, which Global intended to pay the false debt, for personal use and gain. Finally, in yet another aspect of the scheme, the defendants used funds in Global bank accounts to purchase items for their personal use, such as computers and, thereafter, fraudulently obtained reimbursement from DFAS for these purchases.

In addition to the prison term, U.S. District Court Judge Stewart Dalzell ordered Thomas-Erby to pay restitution in the amount of \$793,261.57 and complete three years of supervised release. She was ordered to report to prison on March 10, 2011.

The case was investigated by the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Elizabeth Abrams.

**UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE Contact:**

**EASTERN DISTRICT, PENNSYLVANIA**

**Suite 1250, 615 Chestnut Street**

**Philadelphia, PA 19106**

**PATTY HARTMAN**

**Media Contact**

**215-861-8525**