

NEWS

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Three Defendants Sentenced to Prison Terms For No-show Job Scheme at Fort Monmouth

(More)

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TRENTON – Two former government employees at Fort Monmouth, along with a daughter of one of the employees, were sentenced to federal prison terms today for their scheme to have contractors pay kickbacks and provide no-show jobs for the daughter, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

U.S. District Chief Judge Garrett E. Brown, Jr., sentenced Michael Rzeplinski, 56, of Red Bank, a former programs director for the General Services Administration (GSA) and a former U.S. Army supervisory engineer, to 46 months in prison and ordered Rzeplinski to pay \$862,710 in restitution. Judge Brown sentenced Connie Davidson, 62, a former GSA employee who resides with Rzeplinski, to 12 months in prison and ordered her to pay \$395,710 in restitution. Davidson's daughter, Kirsten Davidson, 33, also of Red Bank, was sentenced to 18 months in prison and ordered to pay \$290,647 in restitution. Judge Brown continued the defendants' release on personal recognizance bonds, secured by a residence they share, pending their surrender to the U.S. Bureau of Prisons.

Each of the defendants entered guilty pleas in U.S. District Court in Trenton before Judge Brown on Aug. 9, 2006. Rzeplinski and Kirsten Davidson pleaded guilty to Count One of the Indictment, which was returned on April 27, 2006, charging conspiracy to defraud the United States by making false claims. Rzeplinski also pleaded guilty to Count Six, charging tax evasion. Connie Davidson pleaded guilty a Superseding Information charging her with aiding and abetting the submission of false claims to the United States.

At his plea hearing, Rzeplinski admitted he used his position at Fort Monmouth to arrange no-show jobs for Kirsten Davidson with two companies that held contracts to provide information technology-related support services at Fort Monmouth. In addition, Rzeplinski admitted that he used a sole proprietorship he controlled, "ZED Services," to receive payments from one of the contractors.

Rzeplinski admitted that between February 2002 and October 2005, he caused projects to be awarded to two companies, Aquila Management and PCC Technology Group, to provide IT-related services at Fort Monmouth. Rzeplinski admitted that he had the companies hire Kirsten Davidson to perform computer-related work and that the companies billed the government for time that Kirsten Davidson was supposed to have worked. Rzeplinski admitted that he approved invoices for work that Kirsten Davidson never performed.

Rzeplinski admitted that he caused PCC to hire a his company, ZED Services, as a subcontractor. Rzeplinski admitted from June 2002 until October 2005, he had PCC mail monthly checks in amounts of \$4,000, and later \$4,500, to a post office box he controlled, which were disguised as payments to ZED Services for subcontracting work. Rzeplinski admitted that ZED Services never performed any work as a subcontractor. In total, the Government paid approximately \$862,710 to Aquila and PCC for work that Kirsten Davidson and ZED were purported to have performed, even though neither ever performed

any work.

In pleading guilty to one count of tax evasion, Rzeplinski admitted that for tax years 2002, 2003, and 2004, he failed to file federal income tax returns, and thereby avoided paying a total of approximately \$47,081 in federal income tax due. Rzeplinski admitted that he failed to file despite having six-figure income from both his government employment and the scheme he set up with ZED Services during those tax years.

Prior news releases concerning the defendants' indictment and guilty pleas are available by following the appropriate links on the office website located at: <http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/nj>

In determining the actual sentences, Judge Brown consulted the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges that take into account the severity and characteristics of the offense, the defendant's criminal history, if any, and other factors. The judge, however, is 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 Defense Criminal Investigative Service, under the direction of Resident Agent in Charge James W. Murawski in Edison, the General Services Administration, Office of Inspector General, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Daniel J. Walsh in New York, the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation Division, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Patricia J. Haynes in Newark, and the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command, under the direction of Resident Agent in Charge Carl Russ, Philadelphia Fraud Resident Agency, with the investigation leading to the Indictment.

The Government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Eric M. Schweiker of the Criminal Division in Trenton.

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Defense Attorneys:

Michael Rzeplinski - Brian Reilly, Esq., Asst. Fed. Public Defender

Connie Davidson - Timothy Boney, Esq., Trenton

Kirsten Davidson - Robert Obler, Esq., Lawrenceville