

**U.S. Department of Justice**

*United States Attorney*

*Eastern District of Virginia*  
2100 Jamieson Avenue (703)299-3700  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

**PRESS RELEASE**

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For further information contact  
Sam Dibbley 703-299-3822

Paul J. McNulty, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, announced the sentencing today of Kathleen M. Brassell, 44 years old, of Manassas, Virginia, in United States District Court in Alexandria by Judge T. S. Ellis, III to 37 months imprisonment and \$1.7 million restitution. Brassell was convicted on November 6, 2002, of theft of government property stemming from her use of a Department of Defense IMPAC charge card to make over \$1,711,000 of fictitious purchases from a Seattle firm operated by a co-schemer.

Brassell, the civilian director of the Pentagon's Graphics and Presentations Division, was responsible for producing graphics and artwork for Pentagon briefings. From May 1999 through August 2002, Brassell used a Department of Defense IMPAC charge card to make approximately 522 false purchases of goods and services from a Seattle company created by her co-schemer solely to facilitate the fraud. No goods or services were ever delivered to the Department of Defense from the Seattle company for any of the purported sales charged to Brassell's IMPAC card. Brassell split the Department of Defense's payments with her Seattle co-schemer who delivered Brassell's share in the form of cash and cashier's checks.

In order to conceal the fictitious IMPAC charge card purchases, Brassell created false invoices which she provided to auditors from the Department of Defense, Office of Inspector General, during an audit in June 2002. In one instance, Brassell submitted false invoices from

the Seattle company for graphics and artwork for the Pentagon Family Assistance Center (PFAC). The PFAC was created to provide counseling and support to victims and survivors of the September 11, 2001, attack on the Pentagon. Brassell created fraudulent invoices which falsely billed over \$136,000 for "biography boards" pertaining to victims of the Pentagon attack, as well as graphic support for the October 11, 2001, Pentagon Memorial Service.

This case is part of a continuing effort to prosecute IMPAC charge card fraud and abuse within the Department of Defense. The case was investigated by the United States Attorney's Office and the Inspector General, Department of Defense, Defense Criminal Investigative Service. This case was presented by Assistant United States Attorney Robert C. Erickson.