



Another Vendor Indicted in Corruption Case Against Former Georgia National Guard Employee

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ATLANTA – Angela Thicklin (f/k/a Angela Stanback Kinlaw) has been indicted for allegedly conspiring with Raytosha Elliott, a former contracting official with the Georgia Department of Defense, to obtain contracts in exchange for illegal kickbacks.

“Thicklin is the second vendor charged in this corruption case involving a former Georgia National Guard employee who is charged with awarding contracts to her friends, like Thicklin, in exchange for illegal kickbacks,” said United States Attorney Sally Quillian Yates.

J. Britt Johnson, Special Agent in Charge, FBI Atlanta Field Office, stated: “The alleged actions of these defendants reflect that they have no sense of duty and that they defy the rule of law. They exhibited a very active scheme to defraud. The FBI, in working with its many law enforcement partners, will continue to make such public corruption cases an investigative priority.”

Special Agent in Charge John F. Khin, Southeast Field Office, Defense Criminal Investigative Service, commented, “Ensuring the integrity of Department of Defense programs will always remain one of DCIS' top priorities. DCIS special agents, in collaboration with our Federal and State partners, will fully investigate and bring to justice corrupt employees who undermine the public trust, and use their Government positions for personal gain.”

“Corruption at any level diminishes the hard work and dedication of the thousands of government employees who are dedicated to providing honest services to the American public,” stated Special Agent in Charge, IRS Criminal Investigation Veronica F. Hyman-Pillot. “IRS-Criminal Investigation stands committed to weed out individuals who to take the path to financial success through greed and corruption.”

Interim Inspector General Deb Wallace of the State of Georgia Office of Inspector General said, “This second indictment should serve notice that the State of Georgia Office of Inspector General and its

investigative counterparts will vigorously pursue all parties who choose to perpetrate fraud schemes in government.”

According to United States Attorney Yates, the charges and other information presented in court: From May 2007 through April 2012, Elliott worked for the Georgia Department of Defense, the state agency charged with coordinating and supervising all agencies and functions of the Georgia National Guard. Elliott worked as an Engineering Operations Manager out of the Clay National Guard Center, located at Dobbins Air Reserve Base, in Marietta, Ga. In that position, Elliott worked with engineering firms to develop bid-ready construction projects, prepared bid documents, and oversaw no-bid purchase orders. Under the rules governing the contracting process that Elliott oversaw, projects that cost less than \$5,000 did not need to go through a competitive bidding process, allowing Elliott to award the contracts. She then certified that the work had been completed for those projects, and facilitated payment to the vendors who allegedly completed such projects.

In that position, Elliott awarded numerous contracts under \$5,000 to vendor companies created by her friends and associates, including co-defendant Angela Thicklin. In return, the friends and associates paid Elliott kickbacks, equal to 50% of the value of the contracts, for steering the contracts to them. Elliott falsely certified that work had been completed when, in fact, it had not been, in order to facilitate payment. One of the vendor companies was 3M Construction LLC, which was owned by co-defendant Thicklin. Elliott awarded 3M Construction at least six contracts with a total value of approximately \$25,000. Those contracts were for a variety of services supposedly to be performed by 3M Construction, including electrical work, landscaping, and HVAC work.

Instead, the defendants split the money awarded under these contracts and spent it on personal items, including travel, meals, and merchandise. As part of the scheme, Elliott owned a company named Tech Group Investments, LLC. Thicklin took money she had obtained from the Georgia Department of Defense contracts, and paid kickbacks to Elliott through this company.

Elliott also awarded at least 17 contracts, worth approximately \$75,000, to a company named Total Source Solution, LLC, which was owned by Lakeysha Ellis. On March 27, 2014, Ellis pleaded guilty to conspiring with Elliott to obtain these contracts in exchange for kickbacks. The alleged scheme involving Total Source Solution worked in a similar fashion to the one involving 3M Construction.

Additionally, Ellis pleaded guilty to conspiring with Elliott to defraud Baum Mueller-Nuermont Corporation, an industrial equipment company with offices in Atlanta, Ga. The indictment alleges that Elliott and Ellis defrauded the company from January 2009 through May 2011, when Ellis was an accountant there. Ellis falsified employee records in the corporation’s payroll system to disguise payments to the defendants’ two companies. Ellis created at least two phantom employees by altering the names of real employees (by switching their first and last names) and slightly changing their Social Security numbers. She then caused the payroll system to make fraudulent salary payments to Total Source Solution and Tech Group Investments for these new, non-existent employees. Baum Mueller-Nuermont lost about \$85,000 from this scheme.

The 15-count superseding indictment charges Elliott, 34, and Thicklin, 43, both of Atlanta, Ga., with conspiracy and bribery of a public official. Elliott is also charged with separate counts of conspiring

with Ellis and wire fraud. After the original indictment was returned on January 14, 2014, Ellis, 36, of Atlanta, Ga., pleaded guilty to two counts of conspiracy.

Members of the public are reminded that the indictment contains only allegations. The defendant is presumed innocent of the charges and it will be the government's burden to prove the defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt at trial.

This case is being investigated by Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation; the U.S. Department of Defense, Office of Inspector General, Defense Criminal Investigative Service; Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation; the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command; the Deputy Inspectors General of the State of Georgia Office of the Inspector General; and the Georgia Bureau of Investigation.

Assistant United States Attorney Stephen H. McClain is prosecuting the case.

For further information please contact the U.S. Attorney's Public Affairs Office at USAGAN.PressEmails@usdoj.gov or (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the home page for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia Atlanta Division is <http://www.justice.gov/usao/gan/>.