

Department of Justice

Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Two Individuals Plead Guilty to Conspiring to Launder Bribes Received in Afghanistan

Two individuals have pleaded guilty for their roles in a scheme to launder approximately \$250,000 in bribes received from Afghan contractors in Afghanistan.

Assistant Attorney General Leslie R. Caldwell of the Justice Department's Criminal Division, United States Attorney for the Western District of Tennessee Edward L. Stanton III and United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Tennessee William C. Killian made the announcement.

Jimmy W. Dennis, 44, formerly of Clarksville, Tennessee, and a former First Sergeant with the U.S. Army, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Court Judge Samuel H. May Jr. of the Western District of Tennessee to conspiracy to launder approximately \$250,000 in bribe payments he received from Afghan contractors in Afghanistan. Sentencing is scheduled for Sept. 4, 2014.

James C. Pittman, 45, of Rossville, Georgia, pleaded guilty last Thursday before U.S. Magistrate Judge William B. Carter of the Eastern District of Tennessee for his role in this conspiracy. Sentencing is scheduled for Sept. 8, 2014.

According to pleadings filed at the time of the guilty pleas, from March 2008 through March 2009, Dennis was an Army Sergeant assigned as a paying agent in the Humanitarian Aid Yard (HA Yard) at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan. Dennis was a member of the team in the HA Yard that purchased supplies from local Afghan vendors for distribution as part of the Commander's Emergency Response Program for urgent humanitarian relief requirements in Afghanistan. Dennis and a partner entered into an agreement to steer contracts to certain Afghan vendors in return for approximately \$250,000 in cash bribes.

Further according to court pleadings, Dennis smuggled the bribe money back to the United States hidden in packages addressed to his wife, his father and a former Army friend, Pittman. Dennis sent \$80,000 to \$100,000 to his father from Afghanistan in packages that contained toy "jingle trucks," colorfully decorated trucks or buses in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Dennis hid the money in the rear compartment of the toy trucks. Dennis also shipped a hope chest to his father containing approximately \$100,000 in cash in a concealed compartment.

Also according to court documents, while on leave, Dennis met with Pittman, advised him that he had obtained money through kickbacks, and asked him for help laundering the funds. Pittman, owner of a landscaping business, agreed to "run through his company" these bribery proceeds. After returning to Afghanistan, Dennis sent approximately \$60,000 to Pittman contained in toy jingle trucks. Dennis also arranged for his father to send approximately \$20,000 to Pittman, who returned it in the form of purported salary checks from Pittman's company.

These matters are being investigated by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, the FBI, the Army Criminal Investigative Division, the Defense Criminal Investigative Service, and the Air Force Office of

Special Investigation. The prosecution is being handled by Trial Attorney Daniel Butler of the Criminal Division and Assistant U.S. Attorneys Frederick Godwin of the Western District of Tennessee and James Brooks of the Eastern District of Tennessee.