



NEWS RELEASE

From New York State Inspector General
Catherine Leahy Scott

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FORMER STATE EMPLOYEE PAYS \$120,000 FORFEITURE AND RESTITUTION FOR RUNNING ONLINE TRADEMARK COUNTERFEITING STORES WHILE ON STATE TIME

*Former Albany-Based ITS Employee Sentenced For Time and Attendance Larceny
And Offering For Sale Over \$100,000 Of Counterfeit Cell Phone Cases*

NEW YORK – New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott and Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced the sentencing of Wajahat A. Abbasi, a former employee of the New York State Office of Information Technology Services, for stealing over \$38,000 from the state by charging time for which he was not present at work, and also offering for sale over \$100,000 in counterfeit cell phone cases.

Abbasi, of Colonie, previously pleaded guilty to Grand Larceny in the Fourth Degree for the time and attendance theft and Trademark Counterfeiting in the Second Degree for offering for sale the knockoff cell phone cases, both class E felonies. Today, the Honorable Peter Lynch of Albany County Court sentenced Abbasi to five years' probation. As part of a plea arrangement, Abbasi resigned from his job and forfeited \$120,000, including over \$38,000 in restitution to the state for lost wages.

“Instead of serving the public this former employee served only himself, running an illicit online enterprise while charging taxpayers for his time,” said Inspector General Leahy Scott. “The defendant’s conduct will not be tolerated, and as with this case, I will continue to strive to recoup any misappropriated public funds as well as other ill-gotten gains.”

“Those who serve the public must be held to the highest ethical standards and today’s sentencing makes it clear that individuals who violate the public trust will be held accountable,” said Attorney General Schneiderman. “As a result of this sentencing, the State of New York will recover wages for the hours the defendant failed to work and the defendant will forfeit proceeds from his illegal activities.”

Inspector General Scott’s investigation revealed that Abbasi, a former employee of the New York State Office of Information Technology Services, claimed to have worked 1,100 hours

when in fact he was not present at his workstation. During the time period when he was collecting pay while not being present for work, he was running a series of businesses that sold technology equipment through eBay and Amazon. Investigators found approximately \$219,000 in counterfeit goods in his possession. The counterfeit goods consisted of imitation cellular telephone and electronic tablet cases purportedly made by such well-established companies as Griffin, OtterBox and UAG.

Abbasi conducted his business between November 2012 and December 2014, using numerous bank accounts, corporations and Amazon and eBay storefronts, some associated with fraudulent names and mailing addresses. The goods were purchased in China, and shipped to and stored at Abbasi's residence. These companies have been fully cooperating in the investigation.

The Inspector General thanked Attorney General Schneiderman and his office for their assistance with the investigation and prosecution, the Office of Information Technology Services and the Office of General Services for their cooperation, and the United States Postal Inspection Service for its assistance with the investigation, which led to Abbasi's arrest in December.

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