



NEWS RELEASE

From New York State Inspector General
Catherine Leahy Scott

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Aug. 24, 2016
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FORMER STATE EMPLOYEE ADMITS STEALING DOZENS OF NEW LAPTOP COMPUTERS MEANT FOR GOVERNMENT OFFICES

ALBANY – New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott today announced that a former State employee has pleaded guilty to stealing 45 new laptop computers destined for State agencies that instead were sold through a Warren County retail store that advertised the portable computers on Facebook.

Brian Baker, 46, of Route 29, Schuylerville, a former “Information Tech Support II” with the State Office of Information Technology Services, pleaded guilty in Albany County Court today to the charge of Attempted Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, a felony. Baker admitted in court to stealing the laptop computers, worth a total of about \$30,000, from a State office storage facility in Albany throughout 2015. The laptops were all new and still in their boxes.

“This former public employee used his State government access to brazenly steal tens of thousands of dollars worth of taxpayers’ property over the course of a year,” said Inspector General Leahy Scott. “I will continue to diligently work to protect our government’s assets and pursue anyone who violates the public’s trust.”

Inspector General Leahy Scott’s investigation uncovered postings on the Facebook page of LGB Computers as well as the South Glens Falls Online Garage Sale group page. The postings, made at various times throughout 2015, noted brand new HP and Dell laptop computers for sale matching the specifications of the computers stolen from the State. The computers were advertised for sale at between \$399 and \$479 each, plus tax, available through LGB and complete with manufacturer’s warranty. Subsequent investigation found several laptops for sale at the LGB Computers store with the same serial numbers of those stolen from the State.

Baker was the lead figure among four charged last November as part of the computer theft and resale ring. Cases against the other three remain pending.

Baker is due back in Albany County Court Oct. 12 for sentencing.

Inspector General Leahy Scott thanked the New York State Police for their assistance with the arrests, as well as Warren County District Attorney Kathleen B. Hogan and Albany County District Attorney P. David Soares and their offices for the prosecution of this matter.

Defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty in a court of law.

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