



# NEWS RELEASE

From New York State Inspector General  
**Catherine Leahy Scott**

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## **FORMER STATE EMPLOYEE WHO CHARGED HIS WEDDING CEREMONY AND FAMILY VACATIONS TO A GOVERNMENT CREDIT CARD PLEADS GUILTY TO GRAND LARCENY**

ROCHESTER – New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott today announced the felony guilty plea of a former employee of the New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (“OPWDD”) who made more than \$16,500 in unapproved personal purchases on a state issued credit card, including limousine services, a wedding ceremony and family vacations at an upstate amusement park.

Donald L. Chrisman, 46, formerly of Niagara Falls and now living on Almay Road in Rochester, pleaded guilty in Monroe County Court today to Grand Larceny in the Fourth Degree, a felony.

An investigation by Inspector General Leahy Scott found that between June 1, 2015, and August 18, 2015, Chrisman made at least 249 unapproved personal transactions using his state issued credit card, totaling over \$16,500 in charges. Chrisman charged more than \$4,000 on personal limousine services for himself and his family during that period. He and his family used the limousine services for rides to various locations including Wal-Mart, numerous restaurants, and family vacations at Darien Lake amusement park, improperly using the state-issued credit card for purchases at each location. Chrisman also used the card to pay for a ceremony at The Falls Wedding Chapel in Niagara Falls where he and his wife renewed their vows.

“This defendant’s rampant and repeated abuse of taxpayer funds was brazen and unabashed,” said Inspector General Leahy Scott. “I will use my office and resources to vigorously pursue any government worker who shows such disdain for their obligation to the public they serve.”

Chrisman was employed by OPWDD as a Peer Advocate from August 7, 2003 until his resignation in February, 2016. As a Peer Advocate, his responsibilities included providing guidance to and advocating for people with developmental disabilities. He was assigned a State credit card to be used for travel expenses as part of his work-related duties.

Chrisman is due back in Monroe County Court for sentencing on Jan. 12, 2017.

Inspector General Leahy Scott thanked the New York State Police for their assistance with the arrest and Monroe County District Attorney Sandra Doorley and her office for prosecuting this matter.

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