



NEWS RELEASE

From New York State Inspector General
Catherine Leahy Scott

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INSPECTOR GENERAL SCOTT: STATE EMPLOYEE INDICTED ON CHARGES HE USED STATE TIME TO SELL COUNTERFEIT GOODS OVER THE INTERNET

New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott announced the indictment of an Albany area state employee who was charged with offering for sale more than \$100,000 in counterfeit goods on the Internet and falsifying his timesheets to enable him to conduct his illegal activities on state time. The timesheet falsification amounted to an alleged \$38,000 theft of state services.

“Those who work in the public sector and provide services for the people of the state of New York are expected to accomplish their work duties in a responsible and law abiding fashion,” said Inspector General Scott. “The defendant allegedly abused his position and authority by trafficking in illegal goods on the Internet while on state time. He will be held accountable not only for this activity but also for the falsification of his time and attendance records, which amounts to a larcenous theft from the state.”

“Those who serve the public must be held to high ethical standards, and when individuals abuse the trust placed in them, there must be consequences,” said Attorney General Schneiderman. “When public employees fail to work the hours for which they are paid, they steal from taxpayers and deprive the public of services they expect.”

Wajahat Ali Abbasi, 37 of Watervliet was indicted today with one count of Trademark Counterfeiting in the First Degree, a class C felony; two counts of Trademark Counterfeiting in the Second Degree, a class E felony; and one count of Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, a class D felony. Abbasi was also charged with 53 counts of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, a class E felony for the falsification of time and attendance records, resulting in a more than \$38,000 theft of state services between November 2012 through December 2014.

Inspector General Scott’s investigation revealed that Abbasi, an 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. 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 is alleged to have 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. Inspector General Scott said these companies have been fully cooperating in the investigation.

The Inspector General thanked the Office of the New York State Attorney General for its 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.

Abbasi was arraigned before the Hon. Peter Lynch of Albany County Court. The Defendant is deemed innocent unless and until proven guilty in a court of law.

An audio recording of Inspector General Scott's comments about the case can be found [here](#).

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