



# NEWS RELEASE

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

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## **INSPECTOR GENERAL SCOTT: STATE EMPLOYEE PLEADS GUILTY TO CHARGES HE USED STATE TIME SELLING COUNTERFEIT GOODS OVER THE INTERNET**

New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott and New York State Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman announced the guilty plea of an Albany area state employee who had been 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 more than \$38,000 in theft of state services from November 2012 through December 2014.

“The defendant violated his public trust by lying about the time he worked for the state, stealing from the taxpayers by using state time to make a personal profit on the internet,” said Inspector General Scott. “His violation of the public trust and illegal commercial activity has consequences, and I am pleased that the profits he reaped from his misconduct are being recovered.”

“Public servants are expected to be held to the highest ethical standards, and when they violate the public’s trust there must be consequences, just as there were today,” said Attorney General Schneiderman. “When a public employee fails to work the hours for which they are paid, it deprives all taxpayers of the services they expect and deserve.”

Wajahat Ali Abbasi, 37 of Watervliet pled guilty today to one count of Trademark Counterfeiting in the Second Degree, a class E felony, and one count of Grand Larceny in the Fourth Degree, a class E felony.

As part of the plea, Abbasi has agreed to resign from State service and forfeit illegal proceeds in the amount of \$120,000, with \$38,482.64 of that amount being paid in restitution.

As an employee of the New York State Office of Information Technology Services, Abbasi claimed to have worked over 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 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 pled before the Hon. Peter Lynch of Albany County Court. He is scheduled to return to court June 25.

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

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