



U.S. Department of Justice

Ronald C. Machen Jr.
*United States Attorney for the
District of Columbia*

*Judiciary Center
555 Fourth St. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530*

PRESS RELEASE

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For Information Contact:

Public Affairs

(202) 252-6933

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Former Investigator/Tax Auditor of the D.C. Office of Tax & Revenue and Maryland Businessman Sentenced in Scheme To Cheat D.C. Government of More Than \$100,000

WASHINGTON - Shelly-Ann N. Wicker, 37, a former Investigator/Tax Auditor for the D.C. Office of Tax & Revenue (OTR), and John F. Craul Jr., 58, a Maryland businessman, were sentenced today on federal charges stemming from a scheme that cost the D.C. government more than \$100,000, announced U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr. and Charles J. Willoughby, Inspector General for the District of Columbia.

Wicker, now of Homestead, Fla., pled guilty in November 2010 to one count of receipt of a bribe by a public official. Craul, of Frederick, Md., the former president and owner of a tax consulting company called Metropolitan Business Associates, LLC, pled guilty in November 2010 to one count of misdemeanor supplementation of government salary.

Both appeared before the Honorable Judge Reggie B. Walton in U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. Wicker was sentenced to five years of supervised probation and 200 hours of community service, and ordered to pay restitution of \$106,232. Craul was sentenced to three years of probation and 200 hours of community service, and ordered to pay a fine of \$2,500.

The case involved certificates providing exemptions from certain D.C. taxes. During her plea, Wicker admitted that on or about August 31, 2006, Craul gave her \$500 to expedite the processing of Forms OTR-612 (Rev. 12/01) Certificates of Specific Exemption from D.C. Sales & Use Tax, which he filed on behalf of his business's clients. Wicker accepted the money from Craul and indeed expedited the processing of the certificates.

Then, on or about December 23, 2006, Craul telephoned Wicker and offered her \$1,500 if she would agree to expedite the processing of additional exemption certificates that he had submitted on behalf of other clients of his company. Wicker agreed. That same day, she met with Craul at the Office of Tax and Revenue's offices in Washington, D.C. Although Craul had promised her \$1,500, he only gave her \$1,300 to rush the application approval process.

In exchange for the \$1,800 that Craul gave to Wicker, she expedited the processing of the exemption certificates and then provided him with fraudulently issued certificates for use by his clients. Wicker used the money she received from Craul to pay personal expenses.

As a result of Wicker's conduct, the D.C. Government sustained loss of tax revenue of approximately \$106,232.

U.S. Attorney Machen and Inspector General Willoughby praised the outstanding efforts of the Special Agents of the District of Columbia's Office of Inspector General and Charles B. Fultz from the Office of Integrity and Oversight, Office of the Chief Financial Officer. They also commended the efforts of Paralegal Specialists Diane Hayes and Legal Assistant Krishawn Graham. Finally, they praised the work of Assistant U.S. Assistant Attorney Lionel André, who indicted and prosecuted the case.

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