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Former Acting Inspector General for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Pleads Guilty to Scheme to Defraud the U.S. Government

Charges Involve Theft of Proprietary Software

A former Acting Inspector General for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General (DHS-OIG) pleaded guilty today to federal charges stemming from the theft of proprietary software and sensitive databases from the U.S. government.

According to court documents, Charles K. Edwards, 61, of Sandy Spring, Maryland, executed a scheme to steal confidential and proprietary software from the government. Edwards worked for DHS-OIG from February 2008 until December 2013, including as Acting Inspector General. Prior to DHS-OIG, he worked at the U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (USPS-OIG). At both agencies, Edwards had access to software systems, including one used for case management and other systems holding sensitive personal identifying information of employees.

After leaving DHS-OIG, Edwards founded Delta Business Solutions Inc., located in Maryland. From at least 2015 until 2017, he stole software from DHS-OIG, along with sensitive government databases containing personal identifying information of DHS and USPS employees, so that his company could develop a commercially-owned version of a case management system to be offered for sale to government agencies.

Edwards pleaded guilty in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia to conspiracy to commit theft of government property and theft of government property. A second defendant in the case, Murali Y. Venkata, 56, of Aldie, Virginia, has pleaded not guilty to charges and his case remains pending. Edwards will be sentenced at a later date. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after considering the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

Assistant Attorney General Kenneth A. Polite Jr. of the Justice Department's Criminal Division, U.S. Attorney Matthew M. Graves for the District of Columbia, Inspector General Dr. Joseph V. Cuffari of DHS-OIG and Inspector General Tammy Whitcomb of USPS-OIG made the announcement.

Senior Litigation Counsel Victor R. Salgado of the Criminal Division's Public Integrity Section and the Public Corruption and Civil Rights Section of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia are prosecuting the case.

An indictment is merely an allegation, and Venkata is presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

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