

United States Attorney's Office

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Former PTO Employee Sentenced 18 Months in \$500,000 Embezzlement Scheme

ALEXANDRIA, Va. – Karen L. Parish, 39, of Woodbridge, Va., was sentenced today to 18 months in prison, followed by three years of supervised release, for embezzling \$500,000 from the U.S Patent and Trademark Office. She was also ordered to pay \$527,478.55 in restitution.

Neil H. MacBride, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, and Scott Berenberg, Assistant Inspector General for Investigations for the U.S. Department of Commerce, made the announcement sentencing by United States District Judge T.S. Ellis, III.

Parish pled guilty to conspiracy to commit wire fraud on Aug. 27, 2009. According to court records, Parish was a financial analyst for the U.S Patent and Trademark Office. She managed an account to which PTO customers deposited funds that were to be used to pay expenses incurred in processing their patent and trademark applications. Over a period of seven years, Parish transferred funds from this account to accounts controlled by co-conspirator Michael Reid, 50, of Fort Washington, Md. Parish fraudulently concealed the transfers by falsely making them look like refund payments to PTO customers. During the course of the conspiracy, Parish and Reid stole \$534,338.55 from the PTO.

Reid pled guilty on Aug. 10, 2009, and was also sentenced today by United States District Judge Claude M. Hilton to 18 months in prison, followed by three years of supervised release. Reid will also be required to pay, jointly with Parish, \$527,478.55 in restitution.

The case was investigated by the U.S. Department of Commerce Office of Inspector General. Assistant United States Attorney Edmund P. Power is prosecuting the case on behalf of the United States.

A copy of this press release may be found on the website of the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Virginia at <http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/vae>. Related court documents and information may be found on the website of the District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia at <http://www.vaed.uscourts.gov> or on <http://pacer.uspci.uscourts.gov>.

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