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Customs and Border Protection Officer Sentenced for Computer Theft

(Norfolk, Va) - John Joseph Rendzia, Jr., age 42, of Norfolk, Virginia, pled guilty today to embezzlement and conversion of an airline passenger's laptop computer that came into Rendzia's possession in the execution of his office as a U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). United States Magistrate Judge James E. Bradberry immediately sentenced Rendzia to two years probation, a \$500 fine, and ordered restitution to the victims for the loss of the embezzled computer.

Dana J. Boente, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, and Mark J. Laria, Area Port Director for CBP, made the announcement after the plea and sentencing. In accordance with the plea agreement, Rendzia had earlier resigned from federal service.

According to court documents, on March 19, 2008, Rendzia was on duty as a CBP supervisor at the Philadelphia International Airport. A family returning from vacation left a laptop computer in the Customs area and the laptop was missing when they returned to look for it. The family reported it stolen to the airport police, and a CBP officer later found the laptop and turned it in to Rendzia, the officer's supervisor.

Rendzia kept the laptop and brought it to Norfolk where he was transferred in August 2008 and converted the laptop to his own use. A computer operating system on the laptop traced it to an address in Norfolk, and special agents of the DHS Office of Inspector General (OIG) obtained a search warrant and together with agents from the FBI, the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, the Norfolk Airport Police, and a detective from the Philadelphia Airport Police, seized the laptop and obtained statements from Rendzia and another person. Forensic analysis of the laptop by NCIS confirmed that Rendzia had deleted the owners' user profiles,

installed new profiles, and converted the computer to his own use.

Assistant United States Attorney James A. Metcalfe prosecuted 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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