

Former Federal Government Contract Officer Sentenced to Prison for Accepting Bribes - GSA Office of Inspector General

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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

District of Columbia

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Defendant Worked at General Services Administration

WASHINGTON – Ronnie Simpkins, 68, of Lusby, Maryland, a former government contract officer with the General Services Administration (GSA), was sentenced to a 21-month prison term on a federal bribery charge stemming from a scheme in which he accepted bribes from government contractors from August 2011 to August 2017. Simpkins pled guilty to the charge on December 19, 2019.

The announcement was made by Acting U.S. Attorney Michael R. Sherwin, Robert E. Bornstein, acting Special Agent in Charge, FBI Washington Field Office, Criminal Division, and Eric D. Radwick, Acting Special Agent in Charge, General Services Administration, National Capital Region, Office of Investigations.

According to the government's evidence, from 1989 until May 2019, Simpkins was employed by the General Services Administration ("GSA") as a Contract Specialist, informally known as a Contracting Officer, in procurement related positions, and between August 2013 and May 2019, he worked as a Contract Specialist assigned to GSA's headquarters in Washington, D.C. From February 2010 to August 2017, Simpkins was assigned to a sub-division of the Federal Acquisition Service, which oversees the administration of GSA Schedule 70 contracts. "Schedules" are long-term government-wide contracts with commercial companies that provide access to commercial products and services at fair and reasonable prices to the government. "Schedule 70 contracts" provide IT solutions, services, and software to federal, state, and local customer agencies. GSA pre-negotiates the vendors' pricing, terms, and conditions, to streamline the acquisition process while at the same time providing the best value to the end user agency.

According to court papers, Company A, a Northern Virginia corporation, held a GSA Schedule contract, which it actively advertised to prospective federal agency customers. To maintain its GSA Schedule contract, Company A was required to have annual sales in excess of \$25,000—a requirement that could be waived by GSA's administrative contracting officer. Company A was also required to pay an Industrial Funding Fee ("IFF") of 0.75% of all its Schedule sales. Dating back to 2006, Company A maintained its GSA Schedule contract despite reporting no sales and not paying any IFFs since 2006. Simpkins oversaw the contract dating back to 2009.

Simpkins admitted that, for approximately six years between 2011 and 2017, he accepted cash, meals, and furniture from two Company A officials to use his position to help Company maintain its GSA Schedule contract. Simpkins admitted to meeting the Company A officials over a dozen times at various restaurants in Northern Virginia, the Company A officials' residences, and other places, often outside of normal GSA business

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hours and on weekends. At these meetings, the Company A officials treated Simpkins to meals and gave him cash totaling “thousands of dollars into the teens.” In July 2016, Simpkins accepted more than \$2,000 worth of furniture paid for by the officials. Simpkins admitted to taking more than \$12,000 in cash and furniture from the Company A officials.

Simpkins admitted to using his GSA position to help Company A in exchange for these payments. Specifically, Simpkins recommended and signed Company A’s contracts with GSA, even though Company A failed to meet program requirements; deliberately neglected to notify GSA, as he was obligated to do, when Company A’s contract under his supervision no longer met program requirements; and advised Company A about ways to avoid contract cancellation despite failing to meet GSA’s program requirements.

United States District Judge Trevor N. McFadden, who presided over the case, sentenced Simpkins to 21 months in prison, followed by one year of supervised release. The Court also imposed a \$10,000 fine and ordered Simpkins to forfeit \$12,108.91.

The case was investigated by the FBI’s Washington Field Office Criminal Division and GSA Office of Inspector General and prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney’s Office’s Public Corruption and Civil Rights Section.

Source: U.S. Department of Justice [press release](#).