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**FORMER VP OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT FOR GOVERNMENT
CONTRACTOR FOUND GUILTY OF 14 COUNTS OF
UNAUTHORIZED ACCESS TO A PROTECTED COMPUTER**

ALEXANDRIA, Va. – Robert Edwin Steele, 38, of Alexandria, Virginia, was convicted today by a federal jury of 14 counts of unauthorized access to a protected computer.

Neil H. MacBride, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, and Valerie Parlave, Assistant Director in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s Washington Field Office, made the announcement after the verdict was accepted by United States District Judge Gerald Bruce Lee.

Steele was specifically found guilty of two misdemeanor and twelve felony violations of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1030(a)(2). When he is sentenced on July 19, 2013, Steele faces a maximum term of imprisonment of one year on each of the two misdemeanor counts and five years on each of the felonies.

Steele was indicted on December 13, 2012, on fourteen counts of unauthorized access to a protected computer. According to court records and evidence at trial, Steele worked at multiple companies involved in government contracting. On December 15, 2010, Steele resigned from one government contracting firm, described in court documents as “Company A,” due to a dispute about his compensation with Company A and “Company B,” another government contracting firm that was in the process of acquiring Company A.

When Steele left Company A on December 15, 2010, he provided verbal and written assurances to officials of Company A that he would not access its systems after his departure, and even urged them to shut down his existing accounts. That same day, however, Steele began logging into Company A’s email systems using a secret administrative account which he learned about during his work for Company A. Steele immediately began downloading hundreds of proprietary documents using this administrative account.

Shortly after resigning, Steele joined another government contractor, “Company C,” that directly competed with Companies A and B for government contracts. At Company C, Steele worked as “Director of Law Enforcement” and prepared bids for government contracts on law enforcement

projects. In that position, Steele undercut Company A's bid on a government contract by approximately \$100,000, while downloading Company A's documents on the same contract. Although his attempt to win the bid failed, Steele continued to methodically sift through thousands of valuable documents stored on computers for Company A.

From December 15, 2010 until September 2, 2011, when agents for the Federal Bureau of Investigation seized equipment used by Steele to access the account, Company A's system had been accessed by their former employee more than 79,000 times.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Washington Field Office. The Office of the Inspector General for the General Services Administration provided additional assistance.

Assistant United States Attorney Alexander T.H. Nguyen and Special Assistant United States Attorney Jonathan Keim are 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.justice.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 <https://pcl.uscourts.gov>.

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