

**U.S. Department of Justice**

Jeffrey A. Taylor
*United States Attorney
for the District of Columbia*

Judiciary Center
555 4th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530

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For Information, Contact Public Affairs
Channing Phillips (202) 514-6933

Postal Service Employee Pleads Guilty to Fraudulently Claiming
Jury Service Resulting in his Wrongfully Being Paid Salary
-- Employee fraudulently collected \$31,757 in salary while claiming to be on jury duty --

Washington, D.C. - Joseph S. Winstead, a U.S. Postal Service (USPS) employee, has pled guilty to mail fraud for fraudulently claiming to be on jury service for 144 days when, in fact, he was not, resulting in Winstead being paid by the USPS \$31,757.79 in salary to which he was not entitled, U.S. Attorney Jeffrey A. Taylor and David C. Williams, Inspector General for the U.S. Postal Service, announced today.

Winstead, 52, of the 1100 block of Barnaby Terrace, SE, Washington, D.C., entered his guilty plea at a hearing today in U.S. District Court in the District of Columbia before the Honorable John D. Bates. During the plea hearing, Winstead admitted submitting numerous false claims that he continued on jury service in 2004 long after his service, in fact, had concluded. Winstead faces up to 20 years in prison under the federal statute when sentenced later this year, but likely will face 8 to 14 months of imprisonment under the Federal Sentencing Guidelines. As part of his guilty plea, Winstead agreed to make restitution to USPS of \$38,923.95 for this matter as well as a subsequent occasion in 2006 where he also claimed jury service beyond his actual service.

According to the proffer of evidence by the government at the time of the plea, which was agreed to by Winstead, USPS operated the Curseen-Morris Processing and Distribution Center at 900 Brentwood Road, NE, in the District of Columbia. Winstead was employed by the USPS as a Mail Processor, primarily at Curseen-Morris. Included within Winstead's duties, among others, was the processing of U.S. mail.

When a USPS employee is called for jury service in federal court, the employee is entitled to be paid his or her normal salary while they actually serve as a juror or prospective juror. The employee is required, however, to submit documentation from the court showing the days that they actually were serving as a juror or prospective juror so the employee could be paid for court leave. Absent such documentation, the employee would be placed on leave without pay or absence without leave from USPS. In the Fall of 2003, Winstead was sent a Summons by the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia to appear for jury service on October 1, 2003. Winstead did so appear and went through a juror orientation.

Pursuant to the summons, Winstead, in fact, did serve on a jury and did submit to his supervisors documentation that he so served. Winstead, however, also submitted through the U.S. mail fraudulent documents showing him serving on the jury for approximately 144 days when, in fact, he did not do so, including many days past his dismissal from the jury on April 15, 2004. As a result of Winstead's actions, he was paid by the USPS approximately \$31,757.79 that he should not have been paid.

In announcing today's guilty plea, U.S. Attorney Taylor and Inspector General Williams praised the hard work of the agents from his office involved in this matter, especially Special Agent Steven Mason. They also acknowledged the efforts of Legal Assistants Teesha Tobias and Lisa Robinson, as well as Assistant U.S. Attorney Daniel Butler, who is prosecuting this matter.