

**U.S. Department of Justice**

*United States Attorney*

*Eastern District of Virginia*

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**PRESS RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release  
Alexandria, Virginia  
November 6, 2002**

Paul J. McNulty, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, announced that Kathleen M. Brassell, 44 years old, of Manassas, Virginia, pled guilty today in United States District Court in Alexandria to theft of government property stemming from her use of a Department of Defense IMPAC charge card to make over \$1,711,000 of fictitious purchases from a Seattle firm operated by a co-schemer. Brassell, the civilian director of the Pentagon's Graphics and Presentations Division responsible for producing graphics and artwork for Pentagon briefings, faces a maximum sentence of ten years imprisonment, a fine of \$250,000 and full restitution. Judge Timothy S. Ellis III set sentencing for January 17, 2003.

From May 1999 through August 2002, Brassell used a Department of Defense IMPAC charge card to make false purchases of goods and services from a Seattle company created solely to facilitate the fraud. Brassell and a co-schemer used Brassell's IMPAC card to make approximately 522 false purchases of goods and services from the company. No goods or services were ever delivered to the Department of Defense from the Seattle company for any of the alleged sales charged to Brassell's IMPAC card. Brassell received her share of the money generated by this scheme in the form of cash and cashier's checks from the co-schemer who operated the Seattle business.

In order to conceal the fictitious IMPAC charge card purchases, Brassell created false invoices which she provided to auditors from the Department of Defense Office of Inspector General during an audit in June 2002. In one instance, Brassell submitted false invoices from the Seattle company for graphics and artwork for the Pentagon Family Assistance Center (PFAC), which was created to provide counseling and support to victims and survivors of the September 11, 2001, attack on the Pentagon. Brassell created fraudulent invoices which falsely billed over \$136,000 for “biography boards” for victims of the Pentagon attack, as well as graphic support for the October 11, 2001, Pentagon Memorial Service.

This case is part of a continuing effort to prosecute IMPAC charge card fraud and abuse within the Department of Defense. The case was investigated by the United States Attorney’s Office and the Inspector General, Department of Defense, Defense Criminal Investigative Service and prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Robert C. Erickson.