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THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE  
NORTHERN DISTRICT *of* FLORIDA

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**Department of Justice**

U.S. Attorney's Office

Northern District of Florida

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, February 24, 2017

**Active Duty Air Force Master Sergeant Sentenced to  
Prison for Accepting Bribes in a Government Contract  
Fraud Scheme**

**PENSACOLA, FLORIDA** – United States Air Force Master Sergeant Cody Boone Covert, 43, of Fort Walton Beach, was sentenced late yesterday to 23 months in prison and \$126,300 in restitution for conspiracy (to commit theft of honest services and wire fraud) and bribery by a public official. Co-conspirator Michael Allen Braun, 54, of Forest Lake, Minnesota, is scheduled to be sentenced on April 10 at 1:00 p.m. at the United States Courthouse in Pensacola for conspiracy and bribery of a public official. The sentence was announced by Christopher P. Canova, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Florida.

In January 2014, MSgt. Covert, 901st Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, Hurlburt Field, was tasked with procuring specialized equipment in support of C-130 Special Operations Aircraft. Braun, who owned the company Trans Global Storage Solutions, conspired with Covert to obtain a contract from the United States Air Force. Prior to the solicitation of the contract, Braun agreed to provide Covert 45% of the profit from the contract proceeds, if Covert ensured that Trans Global won the contract. Covert submitted a request to purchase the specialized equipment. Because Covert was the requester of the equipment, he was chosen to evaluate each proposal for technical acceptance. Subsequently, Covert decided the Trans Global proposal was the only proposal technically acceptable for the government requirement. After Trans Global was fraudulently awarded the \$126,300 contract from the United States Air Force via Covert's inside influence, Covert and Braun split the proceeds. Covert pled guilty on October 28, 2016, and Braun pled guilty on January 12, 2017.

"The United States Attorney's Office, along with our other federal, state, and local government partners, is committed to upholding the law by exposing corruption and pursuing justice for those lawbreakers who abuse their authority and positions of trust," said U.S. Attorney Canova. "I

commend the work of the investigating and prosecuting team on this case. Public service carries a high ethical standard, and no one is above the law.”

Special Agent-in-Charge Wendell W. Palmer, United States Air Force Office of Special Investigations-Procurement Fraud Detachment 5 Southeast, stated, “This was a great outcome for the investigation and prosecution of those who would do damage to the integrity of the U.S. Air Force acquisition process. Dedicated and thorough work on the part of investigators and prosecutors alike have once again protected the warfighting capability of the world’s greatest air and space fighting force. The teamwork exhibited by investigators and prosecutors, in conjunction with the court, sends a strong message that fraud against our government will not be tolerated.”

“The Defense Criminal Investigative Service, along with our investigative partners and the U.S. Attorney’s Office, will bring to justice anyone who takes bribes and kickbacks to undermine the integrity of the Department of Defense,” commented Special Agent-in-Charge John F. Khin, DCIS, Southeast Field Office. “Corruption and fraud in DoD programs also jeopardizes the safety of our warfighters.”

The case was investigated by the Air Force Office of Special Investigations, the Defense Criminal Investigative Service, and the Defense Contract Audit Agency. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney James M. Ustynski.

The United States Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Florida is one of 94 offices that serve as the nation’s principal litigators under the direction of the Attorney General. To access available public court documents online, please visit the [U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida](#) website. For more information about the United States Attorney’s Office, Northern District of Florida, visit <http://www.justice.gov/usao/fln/index.html>.

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Public Corruption

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