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THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT *of* CALIFORNIA

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**Department of Justice**

U.S. Attorney's Office

Southern District of California

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, April 27, 2018

**Supervisory Border Patrol Agent Convicted of Lying to  
Federal Grand Jury**

**Assistant U.S. Attorney Nicholas Pilchak (619) 546-9709 or Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael  
A. Deshong (619) 546-9290**

**NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY – April 27, 2018**

SAN DIEGO – Supervisory Border Patrol Agent David Wayne Skinner was convicted Thursday of making false statements to a federal grand jury in connection with an investigation of a benefits fraud scheme.

At trial, the jury heard evidence that Skinner's accomplices, former U.S. Marine Corps reservist Major Jason Wild and former Lieutenant Colonel Michael Strom, defrauded the Marine Corps out of \$205,628 between 2006 and 2010, according to evidence admitted at trial. Skinner assisted with the scheme by signing a fake lease agreement used by Strom to make the claims, and by trying to call the military authorities responsible for paying the claim.

Witnesses explained how Strom filed two years' worth of false claims with the Marine Corps, pretending to rent Wild's home from Skinner. All of Strom's claims listed Skinner as the landlord for Wild's property, even though trial evidence established that Skinner never received any of the \$98,716 of rent that Strom claimed to have paid him. Instead, Strom paid Skinner \$1,000 during the duration of the scheme.

Strom pleaded guilty to wire fraud conspiracy and making a false claim in 2016; Wild was convicted in November 2016 after a separate trial. Both men were sentenced to prison terms, and the pair has repaid the entire \$205,628 back to the Marine Corps.

Agents first interviewed Skinner about the fake lease arrangement in August 2013. Shown a copy of the lease agreement, Skinner denied ever seeing it. He again denied authorizing the lease in

an interview with agents and a prosecutor in April 2015. Finally, Skinner testified in the grand jury in September 2015 and once again denied ever seeing the fake lease agreement before agents first showed it to him in 2013. When shown a copy of the agreement with his signature on it in the grand jury, Skinner admitted the signature was his but could not explain how it had arrived on a document he had never seen. Skinner also denied ever receiving any money from Strom, even though the two had spoken by telephone the day Strom wrote Skinner the check for \$1,000.

After a three-day jury trial, the jury found that Skinner knowingly lied when issuing his denials about the lease agreement to the grand jury. He was acquitted of a separate count charging him with falsely denying receiving money from Strom.

Skinner's sentencing hearing is set for August 6, 2018 at 9:00 a.m. before Judge Anthony J. Battaglia.

"America's entire justice system depends upon witnesses giving honest testimony under oath," said U.S. Attorney Adam L. Braverman. "This jury verdict is a powerful reminder that any person who takes the oath and knowingly lies will be held accountable—whether they are a civilian or a career law enforcement officer." U.S. Attorney Braverman also commended the outcome as the result of the years-long close coordination between the Defense Criminal Investigative Service (DCIS), the Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS), the Department of Homeland Security, Office of the Inspector General (DHS OIG), and the Naval Audit Service.

"This conviction should send a clear message that DHS OIG will aggressively investigate DHS employees who brazenly defy federal laws and betray the public trust," declared DHS OIG Special Agent in Charge Amanda Thandi.

"Today's guilty verdict in the trial of current U.S. Border Patrol Supervisory Agent and former U.S. Marine Corpsman David W. Skinner for perjuring himself before a federal grand jury sends a clear message that dishonesty in a federal criminal investigation will not be tolerated," said Chris D. Hendrickson, Special Agent in Charge of the DCIS Western Field Office. "The conduct of Agent Skinner is particularly reprehensible given that he is serving as a federal law enforcement official. Those who serve in the Government have an obligation to uphold the public's trust or pay the consequences. The efforts of DCIS, the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, the Naval Audit Service, Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of Justice resulted in a just verdict."

"NCIS will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to hold responsible those who put personal gain above their responsibility to the nation," said Belinda Saunders, Special Agent in Charge of the NCIS Southwest Field Office. "A law enforcement representative who so readily casts aside the public trust placed in them and lies under oath needs to be held accountable for his actions."

**DEFENDANT—Case Number: 17-cr-1464-AJB**

David Wayne Skinner

**Next Court Date**

Sentencing August 6, 2018

**SUMMARY OF CHARGES**

Count 2: False Declaration to Grand Jury, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1623

Maximum Penalties: 5 years in prison, 3 years supervised release, and a \$250,000 fine

**AGENCIES**

Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General

Defense Criminal Investigative Service

Naval Criminal Investigative Service

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**Component(s):**

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