

Federal Air Marshals Request New Investigation due to the Indictment of DHS OIG Inspector General Charles K. Edwards

Federal Air Marshals Request New Investigation into Allegations of Misconduct/ Illegal Discrimination/Retaliation in Wake of DHS OIG Inspector Indictment

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- The Federal Air Marshal Service detects, deters and defeats hostile acts against aviation. Federal Air Marshals are armed federal law enforcement officers deployed on passenger flights worldwide to protect airline passengers and crew against the risk of criminal and terrorist violence. Federal Air Marshals perform investigative work and participate in multi-agency task forces and in land-based investigative assignments to proactively fight terrorism. The Federal Air Marshal Service promotes public confidence in the safety of the nation's aviation system.



16 Count Indictment for Former DHS OIG Inspector General Charles K. Edwards

The Air Marshal National Council (AMNC), the exclusive voice of flying Federal Air Marshals, announced they are requesting a new Department of Homeland Security , Office of Inspector General (DHS OIG) investigation into allegations of misconduct and illegal employment discrimination within the Federal Air Marshal Service due to today's 16 count indictment of Former DHS OIG Inspector General Charles K. Edwards.

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The TSA/ Federal Air Marshal Service has been plagued with complaints of Fraud, Waste, and Abuse. We deserve a fair and impartial investigation.”
Flying Federal Air Marshal

The [Department of Justice](#) ,Office of Public Affairs released a federal grand jury in the District of Columbia returned a 16-count indictment against a former Acting Inspector General for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security

(DHS) and a former subordinate for their alleged theft of proprietary software and confidential databases from the U.S. government as part of a scheme to defraud the U.S. government. Assistant Attorney General Brian A. Benczkowski of the Justice Department's Criminal Division, U.S. Attorney Timothy J. Shea for the District of Columbia, DHS Inspector General Joseph V. Cuffari and Inspector General Tammy L. Whitcomb for the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) made the announcement.

The indictment charges Charles K. Edwards, 59, of Sandy Spring, Maryland, and Murali Yamazula Venkata, 54, of Aldie, Virginia, with conspiracy to commit theft of government property and to defraud the United States, theft of government property, wire fraud, and aggravated identity theft. The indictment also charges Venkata with destruction of records.

According to the allegations in the indictment, from October 2014 to April 2017, Edwards, Venkata, and others executed a scheme to defraud the U.S. government by stealing confidential and proprietary software from DHS Office of Inspector General (OIG), along with sensitive government databases containing personal identifying information (PII) of DHS and USPS employees, so that Edwards's company, Delta Business Solutions, could later sell an enhanced version of DHS-OIG's software to the Office of Inspector General for the U.S. Department of Agriculture at a profit. Although Edwards had left DHS-OIG in December 2013, he continued to leverage his relationship with Venkata and other DHS-OIG employees to steal the software and the sensitive government databases.

In January 2010, [CNN](#) reported allegations of misconduct and illegal employment discrimination and retaliation in the Federal Air Marshal Service's Florida field office. The reports included descriptions of an agency rife with cronyism; age, gender, and racial discrimination; and unfair treatment in promotions, assignments, and discipline. Also included were photographs of a game board modeled after the television show "Jeopardy!" created and displayed by supervisors there, with categories containing derogatory nicknames referring to veterans, females, African-Americans, Hispanics, and lesbians and gays. Senator Bill Nelson and Congressmen Edolphus Towns and Darrell Issa asked us to review the allegations in Orlando and throughout the agency as well as the circumstances surrounding the game board.

In 2010, The Transportation Security Administration launched an internal investigation into an air marshal field office in Florida where supervisors are alleged to have used a crew assignment board to ridicule and keep score on women, gays and minorities, sources told CNN. DHS OIG Inspector General's Office was tasked with completing a thorough investigation into the egregious allegations. Federal Air Marshals waited two years for the DHS OIG investigation to be completed.

In 2012, then DHS OIG Inspector General Charles K. Edwards, reported "Although individual employees may have experienced discrimination or retaliation, our review does not support a finding of widespread discrimination and retaliation within the Federal Air Marshal Service. However, employees' perceptions of discrimination and retaliation are extensive, and we heard too many negative and conflicting accounts of events to dismiss them. Many Federal Air Marshals and some supervisors think they have been discriminated against, fear retaliation, and believe there is much favoritism. There is a great deal of tension, mistrust, and dislike between non-supervisory and supervisory personnel in field offices around the country. We identified factors that contributed to strained relations and became the basis for the allegations. Limited transparency in management decisions is also at the center of fears of retaliation and perceptions that management is mistreating its workforce." [DHS OIG 12-28](#).

The Federal Air Marshal Service has been plagued with fraud, waste, and abuse. The recent 16 count indictment including conspiracy, theft, wire fraud and identity theft of Former DHS OIG Inspector General Charles K. Edwards calls into question each and every DHS OIG Investigation that was conducting during his tenure as the Agency's "Top Watchdog".

The AMNC provides Federal Air Marshals with a united voice to articulate priority issues to the appropriate authorities both within and outside the Federal Air Marshal Service.

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