



Department of Justice

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FORMER EPA-CID SPECIAL AGENT IN TEXAS PLEADS GUILTY TO PERJURY AND OBSTRUCTION OF JUSTICE

WASHINGTON — A former special agent with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Criminal Investigation Division (CID) in Dallas has pleaded guilty to lying under oath and obstructing justice, announced Assistant Attorney General Lanny A. Breuer of the Justice Department's Criminal Division and Inspector General Arthur A. Elkins Jr. of the EPA's Office of the Inspector General (OIG).

Keith Phillips, 61, of Kent, Texas, pleaded guilty yesterday before U.S. District Judge Richard T. Haik Sr. in the Western District of Louisiana to a two-count indictment charging him with obstruction of justice and perjury. The charges stemmed from his sworn testimony in relation to a case that was pending in the Western District of Louisiana.

According to the indictment, from September 1996 to Dec. 14, 1999, Phillips and a special agent from the FBI participated in a criminal investigation that led to the indictment of Hubert Vidrine Jr. and several others. The criminal charges against Vidrine were ultimately dismissed, and Vidrine, in turn, filed a civil lawsuit against the United States for malicious prosecution. In pleading guilty, Phillips admitted that during a deposition taken in the course of Vidrine's civil suit, Phillips falsely testified that he did not have an affair with the FBI special agent, when, in fact, he did. Phillips admitted that he was aware the proceedings in the civil case were pending on the day he testified and that the existence of the extramarital affair was material to the civil lawsuit. According to a ruling in the civil case on Sept. 30, 2011, the court found that the "inappropriate affair" was highly relevant and material to those proceedings.

In addition, according to court documents, Phillips contacted the FBI special agent on at least three occasions to ensure the special agent knew that Phillips had testified that their relationship was purely professional, when in fact, it was not.

Specifically, Phillips admitted that he testified knowingly and dishonestly about the affair with the specific intent to undermine the due administration of justice. Phillips also admitted that he tried to influence, obstruct and impede the civil suit by testifying falsely that he did not have an extramarital affair with the FBI special agent.

Phillips faces a maximum of 10 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000 on the obstruction of justice count, and five years in prison and a fine of \$250,000 on the perjury count. A sentencing date has not yet been scheduled by the court.

The case is being prosecuted by Marquest J. Meeks and Richard Evans of the Criminal Division's Public Integrity Section. The case was investigated by the EPA OIG, Office of Investigations.

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