

The J Group's EDLA SENTENCING NEWSLETTER



WEEK OF
JUN 21 TO JUN 27

JULY 1, 2026 ISSUE

Theft Concerning Federal Funds and more... see what happened this past week in the Eastern District of Louisiana

CASE SPOTLIGHT

United States v. Francis (EDLA 25-cr-162)

What's the Basis?: According to the factual basis, Francis served as the Chief Operating Officer of the Institute of Women and Ethnic Studies (IWES), a New Orleans nonprofit organization. Between 2021 and 2023, Francis admitted that she misappropriated approximately \$150,000 in organizational funds for her personal benefit. Francis used multiple methods to divert funds, including submitting falsified contracts, invoices, and reimbursement requests, directing unauthorized payroll increases and bonuses to herself, using corporate credit cards for personal purchases, and redeeming organizational reward points for personal expenses. She also admitted to creating sham agreements between IWES and a company she controlled to obtain payments that were deposited directly into her personal bank account. Francis also used nonprofit funds to pay her husband's birthday party and the couple's anniversary celebration.

What's the Violation?: Francis pleaded guilty to *Theft Concerning Programs Receiving Federal Funds*, in violation of **18 U.S.C. § 666(a)(1)(A)**.

What's the Sentence?: Judge Jane Triche Milazzo sentenced Francis to **3 years of probation**.

This Week's Other Matters

U.S. V. VESSEL, 25-CR-214

Charge: Possession with the intent to Distribute 500g or more of Meth
(21 U.S.C. § 841(a)(1) & (b)(1)(A))

Sentence: **15 months of imprisonment; 2 years of supervised release.**

Judge: Honorable Lance M. Africk

U.S. V. PITTMAN, 20-CR-112

(REVOCAATION) Violation of Mandatory Conditions of Supervised Release:
Testing positive for marijuana (multiple incidents).

Sentence: **10 months of imprisonment and 26 months of sup release.**

Judge: Honorable Lance M. Africk

U.S. V. WHITTINGTON, 24-CR-091

Charge: Possession with Intent to Distribute Marijuana, Tramadol, Cocaine, Methamphetamine, and Fentanyl; Possession of a Firearm in Furtherance of a Drug Trafficking Crime;
(21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a)(1), (b)(1)(B), (b)(1)(C), (b)(1)(D), (b)(2); 18 U.S.C. § 924(c)(1)(A)(i), 1959(a)(3))

Sentence: **420 months of imprisonment and 5 years of supervised release.**

Judge: Honorable Brandon S. Long

WHAT'S THAT STATUTE?

CLICK ON THE LINKS BELOW FOR MORE
DETAILS ON THE VIOLATIONS INCLUDED IN
THIS WEEK'S EDITION

- [18 U.S.C. § 666](#)
- [18 U.S.C. § 924](#)
- [18 U.S.C. § 1959](#)
- [21 U.S.C. § 841](#)
- [21 U.S.C. § 846](#)



U.S. V. ROBINSON, 24-CR-224

Charge: Conspiracy to possess with the intent to Distribute Meth; Possession of a Firearm in Furtherance of a Drug Trafficking Crime
(21 U.S.C. § 841(a)(1), (b)(1)(A), 846; 18 § 924(c)(1)(A))

Sentence: **108 months of imprisonment; 5 years of supervised release.**

Judge: Honorable Brandon S. Long

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