

It is hard to live in Atlanta and not be aware of the federal corruption probe of Atlanta city government. This probe has been so extensive that I spent 30 minutes this afternoon going through all the indictments and charges that U.S. Attorney, BJay Pak, has brought so far. By my count, four individuals are currently in jail and one was charged with a misdemeanor.

There are at least two other individuals who have been indicted and one who was sentenced to two years in prison just this Tuesday.

The individual sentenced on Tuesday was Larry Scott. Scott was a contract compliance manager for the City of Atlanta Procurement Division. As reported by the AJC, Scott also operated a side business that assisted companies win contracts with the City of Atlanta.

The City of Atlanta requires most employees to file annual financial disclosure statements which report outside income (that is, income other than their Atlanta salaries). Larry Scott did not report the income from his business on his financial disclosure form and that is partly why he will be wearing orange for the next couple of years.

So why am I bothering you with this story about Mr. Scott? The issue which I hope you have already begun to think about is the conflict of interest. By using his private company to consult with contractors who were trying to gain business from the City of Atlanta, Scott was acting for the benefit of those contractors and potentially against the interests of his primary employer, the City. If one of Scott's personal clients made a bid proposal to Atlanta, certainly it's in Scott's personal interest to use his influence inside City Hall to help that client win the contract – even if that bid is not in the best interest of the City.

Because Scott failed to report his company's income on his financial disclosure statement, the City of Atlanta was deprived of the ability to assess this conflict and resolve it in an appropriate way.

Thanks for reading.

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