

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
4201 WILSON BOULEVARD
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22230



OFFICE OF
INSPECTOR GENERAL

MEMORANDUM

Date: January 2, 1997

To: I96040023

From: [REDACTED], Special Agent [REDACTED]

Via: [REDACTED], Special Agent-in-Charge [REDACTED]

Re: Resolution of Case [REDACTED]

On April 18, 1996, we received an allegation that [REDACTED] posed as an NSF program manager to graduate students and distributed documents bearing the NSF name, seal, and address without authorization from NSF. During our subsequent investigation, [REDACTED] (who is not an NSF employee) admitted that he posed as an NSF program officer by creating documents and an identification badge, but denied ever attempting to defraud anyone using this guise. Further investigation substantiated that [REDACTED] had never received any money, favors, or services from anyone in return for any actions he may have promised while acting under the guise of an NSF program manager.

On November 21, 1996, our office sent a letter to the U.S. Attorney's Office (USAO) in Atlanta, GA seeking assistance in resolving this case. To date the USAO has not responded to this letter or our repeated follow-up telephone calls. Due to this lack of response, our office has concluded that, at this time, the USAO does not have the resources to prosecute this case.

This case is closed. |

REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

OIG Case Number I96040023

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Investigation Report

Case No. I96040023

I. Violations

Based on the evidence gathered during this investigation, we have determined that [redacted] knowingly and intentionally committed the following violations:

1. Possessed an imitation National Science Foundation identification card in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 701, *Possession of a False Identification Card*.
2. Falsely portrayed himself and acted as an officer of the National Science Foundation in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 912, *Falsely Pretending to be an Officer or Employee of the United States*.
3. Fraudulently affixed the seal of the National Science Foundation to two documents he fabricated, a false identification badge, a sign, and a shirt in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1017, *Government Seals Wrongfully Used*.

II. Background: The National Science Foundation

The National Science Foundation (NSF) is an independent federal agency that was created in 1950 to provide financial and other support for research, education, and related activities in science, mathematics, and engineering. Annually, NSF designates approximately \$2.5 billion for over 18,000 individual grants.

III. Basis for Investigation

On April 18, 1996, our office received two documents, bearing the NSF seal, name, and address, from an NSF program manager who suspected their authenticity. The documents, entitled, "Educational Grants for Students in the Mathematical and Physical Sciences" and "Master, Doctoral, and Post-Doctoral Educational Research Application Cover Page" had been sent to the NSF Program Manager by a graduate student at Georgia State University, who alleged that he provided the documents to the graduate student. The complainant further alleged that [redacted] claimed to be an NSF employee in charge of a grant review committee, and had authorized a \$60,000 NSF fellowship award for the complainant.

Our office determined that [redacted] was not employed by NSF and that the documents he gave the complainant were created and distributed without NSF's authorization. Under the authority of

the Inspector General Act¹, we investigated the possibility of
program officer.

impersonating an NSF

IV. Investigative Findings

Based on _____ own admissions², statements by the complainant and witnesses, and documents provided to us by the complainant and witnesses, we conclude that, since August 1995, _____ has impersonated an NSF program officer. _____ accomplished this impersonation by:

Stating to several people that he was employed by NSF as a program officer.

Creating and displaying a false identification badge bearing his photograph, the NSF name, and the NSF seal.

Creating and distributing documents bearing a false NSF letterhead with the NSF name, seal, and address.

Creating and distributing documents falsely associating the NSF name with his name.

Creating and displaying (to the public) a sign on his residence bearing the NSF name and seal.

Producing, displaying, and distributing at least two shirts bearing the NSF name and seal.

V. _____ Admissions and Supporting Witness Statements

Our office determined that _____ has never been employed by NSF, participated in an NSF panel review, or even applied for funds from NSF. _____ confirmed this and stated in his affidavit [see Attachment 2]:

I have never worked for the National Science Foundation, any subcontractor employed by the National Science Foundation, any grantee receiving funds from the National Science Foundation,

¹ Inspector General Act of 1978, *as amended*, 5 U.S.C. app. (1994).

² _____ was interviewed by Special Agent _____ NSFOIG, on June 3, 1996 at the State of Georgia Department of Corrections Probation Office located at 7741 Roswell Rd., Ste. 213, Atlanta, GA. During this voluntary interview _____ signed 10 affidavits and 7 documents (which were used as exhibits with these affidavits).

or any academic or research institution affiliated with the National Science Foundation... I have never applied for any federal grants or any federal contracts.

Furthermore, [redacted] acknowledged that he has never earned any undergraduate or graduate degrees, worked as a paleontologist (or worked for any paleontologists), or submitted any articles to be published. As he stated in his affidavit [see Attachment 2]:

I do not have any undergraduate or graduate degrees. I have never been employed as a paleontologist. I have never received compensation as acting in the capacity of a paleontologist or a research assistant. I have never published any articles in any journals, magazines, or newspapers.³

Regardless of these facts, [redacted] impersonated an NSF program officer for nearly one year. [redacted] stated in his affidavit [see Attachment 2]:

I have told people that I work for the National Science Foundation... I started impersonating an NSF Program Officer in August 1995.

[redacted] explained that he wanted to impress people and that it was his fantasy to be a respected scientist. However, he denied ever using this false identity to defraud anyone.⁴

The False NSF Identification Badge

[redacted] confessed to possessing a false identification badge bearing a color photograph of himself, his name, the NSF name and seal,) and the term "GS-9" [redacted] acknowledged that the term GS-9 was related to federal employees' status but stated he did not specifically know how it was related) [redacted] stated in his affidavit [see Attachment 2]:

I was in possession of a fraudulent identification badge bearing the National Science Foundation name and seal. I had this to further my impersonation of a National Science Foundation program officer. I no longer have this identification badge.

[redacted] claimed that he had asked a friend of his to make the badge (based on information, graphics, and a photograph [redacted] had given him) and that this friend produced the badge and gave it to [redacted] in November or December 1995. He denied ever wearing the badge in public⁵ or using it to gain access to places normally restricted to the public and stated that this was

³ A witness provided our office with drafts of articles that were allegedly created by [redacted] and requested that this witness proofread the articles before he submitted them to various journals. The complainant has also made similar allegations.

⁴ The complainant stated that [redacted] never asked for compensation for the supposed \$60,000 NSF fellowship.

⁵ Both the complainant and a witness confirmed the fact that [redacted] possessed an identification card matching the above description. However, contrary to [redacted] contention that he never wore it in public, the complainant alleged that he had seen [redacted] wear it to a professional baseball game and a witness claimed that [redacted] had worn it when they had attended the [redacted] in Atlanta, GA.

the only false identification badge he has ever possessed. [redacted] contends that he disposed of the badge in April 1996 because he realized he was wrong to possess it.

The False NSF Documents

In January 1996, [redacted] created false NSF letterhead bearing the NSF name seal and address. Also, the letterhead listed a telephone number not registered to NSF⁶ and name under a section entitled, "Program Officers". [redacted] admitted in his affidavit [see Attachments 2 and 3]:

The document labeled "Exhibit A" and bearing my initials is fraudulent. I have made this document with the intent to further my impersonation of an NSF program officer. I created this document and accept responsibility for it... I made this document in January 1996.

[redacted] placed information regarding NSF fellowships on this false letterhead, and gave it to the complainant that same month. [redacted] admitted that he copied, verbatim, an explanation used in a 1994 NSF document to complete this informational sheet.⁷

[redacted] admitted that he created a false NSF fellowship application (bearing the NSF name and seal), and gave it to the complainant along with the informational sheet on false letterhead. As admitted in his affidavit [see Attachments 2 and 3]:

I recognize the document labeled "Exhibit B"... and it is entitled, "Master, Doctoral and Post-Doctoral Educational and Research Funding Application Cover Page"... The document entitled "Exhibit B" and bearing my initials is fraudulent and I made the document to further my impersonation of a National Science Foundation program officer.

[redacted] explained that he did not intend to mail this document to NSF but he wanted complainant to believe that he [redacted] was assisting him in obtaining an NSF fellowship. However, contrary to the complainant's statements, [redacted] denied telling complainant that he had been awarded an NSF fellowship.^{8,9}

⁶ We determined that this telephone number was registered to [redacted].

[redacted] claimed that the document is entitled, "Information Bulletin for Scientists and Engineers" and that he requested and received this document from NSF sometime in late 1994. According to [redacted] he scanned the NSF seal directly from this document into his computer to make both the document labeled "Exhibit A" and "Exhibit B".

[redacted] created both the document labeled "Exhibit A" and "Exhibit B" using the [redacted] software program on a computer at [redacted]. According to [redacted] he scanned the NSF seal directly from this 1994 NSF publication into a computer to create both of these documents. [redacted] was employed [redacted] from September 30, 1995 to January 26, 1996.

⁹ According to the complainant, [redacted] gave him these documents on a computer disk in March 1996, and asked the complainant to return a computer hard copy to him. The complainant claimed that, approximately two weeks

also drafted a fake letter addressed to

etts

stated in his affidavit [see Attachments 2 and 3]:

I have read the document labeled "Exhibit C" and I have initialed and dated this sticker... This document is fraudulent and I created it with the intention of furthering my impersonation of an NSF program officer.

However, [redacted] acknowledged that he has never met or spoken with [redacted] that [redacted] would not know who he was, and that he did not intend to mail the letter. [redacted] said he created and printed this letter on March 14, 1996 on the complainant's personal computer and in complainant's presence. He confirmed that the letter listed [redacted] as the author and, underneath his name, it stated "Board Member- National Science Board/NSF". In addition, the complainant claimed that [redacted] had stated (on several occasions) that he had spoken with [redacted] and that, because of his [redacted] influence, the complainant had been awarded an NSF fellowship.

Other Documents and Acts Aiding [redacted] Impersonation

In September 1995, [redacted] fabricated a fraudulent document entitled, "Personality Type Indicator and Psychological Analysis Results for [redacted]". [redacted] stated in his affidavit [see Attachments 2 and 3]:

I have read the document labeled "Exhibit D" and I have initialed and dated the sticker. The document is entitled "Personality Type Indicator and Psychological Analysis Results for [redacted]". This document is fraudulent and I created it with the intention of making myself feel better and relieving my depression, furthering my impersonation of a National Science Foundation program officer and to impress my then girlfriend.

The letterhead of the document (which [redacted] admitted to creating) consists of the name and logo of the [redacted]. Though the document describes a psychological evaluation for [redacted]; supposed NSF government security clearance. [redacted] confessed that he has never had a federal security clearance. However [redacted] gave a copy of the letter to his girlfriend in November 1995 to further his impersonation of an NSF program officer. He averred that she was the only person he had given it to.

after giving the disk back to [redacted] stated that he had processed the application at NSF and that the complainant would be receiving a \$60,000 fellowship.

[redacted] stated that he used a computer [redacted] to create this document [redacted] also stated that, in reality, his only connection to the [redacted], located at [redacted] was that he repaired one of their employee's [redacted] personal laptop computer sometime in 1995 (he could not recall when).

also admitted to creating and distributing a resume bearing false information about his association with NSF.¹¹ As stated in his affidavit [see Attachments 2 and 3]:

I have read the document labeled "Exhibit E" and I have initialed and dated this sticker... Most of this document is fraudulent, including the job description entitled, "Co-Director for Geosciences Directorate, National Science Foundation". I created this document with the intention of furthering my impersonation of a National Science Foundation program officer and to impress my then girlfriend, [REDACTED].

He said that the only person he gave it to was his girlfriend and that he never used this resume to obtain employment.

He created a grant guide in December 1994, entitled, "An All Purpose Guide to Obtaining Grants: Procedures, Techniques, and Tips, NSF-Paleontology Research Institute, ©NSF-ICDP Project 1993". He stated in his affidavit [see Attachments 2 and 3]:

I have read the document labeled as "Exhibit F" and I have initialed and dated this sticker... I created this document for my own benefit if I ever wanted to apply for a grant. I also created this document with my impersonation of a National Science Foundation program officer and to impress [REDACTED]. This document was made without the authorization or knowledge of the National Science Foundation.

He explained that when he began to impersonate an NSF program officer, he changed the cover page of this document to reflect his supposed association with NSF. However, he could not remember when he changed the cover page. According to him, he only distributed this document to two people.

He admitted to creating fraudulent documents showing his supposed grant funding from federal agencies and private sources.¹³ He acknowledged that all of the information in this document is fraudulent and stated in his affidavit [see Attachments 2 and 3]:

I have read the document labeled "Exhibit G" and I have initialed and dated the sticker... I gave this document to [REDACTED] that same month to impress her about research grants I was supposedly working on... I have never received a grant from any federal or private entity.

He stated he produced this resume on a computer in February or March 1996.

He stated (using Microsoft Word) in

He stated that the document is dated March 23, 1993, but it was not drafted until December 1994. He explained that the document was dated 1993 because this is when he took notes for the creation of this guide. He claimed to have created this document on a computer in the student computer lab while attending [REDACTED].

He stated he made this document at [REDACTED] in October 1995. The document lists this fraudulent information under the following headings: Grant Name, Submission Date, Approval Date, Implementation Date, Document or Grant #, Grant Purpose, Grant Length, Grant Amount, and Grant Curators. Though the document does not list any NSF grants, it does list federal grants from "NOAA" (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) and the "Department of the Navy".

He claimed that he gave the document to only one person in October 1995.

so created a fictitious research institute called the "Paleontology Research Institute" or "PRI", and used this to further his impersonation of an NSF program officer. claimed that he created PRI before he started to impersonate an NSF program officer but that gradually he incorporated PRI into his impersonation. confirmed that PRI exists in name only and that he has filed no incorporation, licensing, or tax papers. could not explain why he attached the NSF name to that of PRI's in certain documents¹⁴ I showed him.

admitted that he went as far as to create a Federal Express shipping account in the name of PRI and that he gave fossils, stenciled with PRI's name, to his friends.¹⁵

While living at [REDACTED] placed a 8½ x 11" sign in his front window with the NSF seal and name. He claimed he could not remember when he placed the sign in the window, but it was within the last year and he removed and discarded the sign approximately one month after he had put it up. He confirmed that he did not have authorization from NSF to do this and stated that he reproduced the sign from a page he saw in an NSF publication. could not provide a rationale for placing this sign in his window.

In addition admitted to designing and producing one T-shirt, bearing the NSF seal and name and a picture of a dinosaur, and immediately giving this T-shirt to his girlfriend. could not remember when he produced the shirt but explained that he used this to further his impersonation of an NSF program officer. Though claimed to have produced only one shirt, the complainant in this case has claimed to have seen wear a similar shirt (in public) on several occasions.

Furthermore, a witness alleged that, in August 1996 asked her to produce a business card with the NSF name, his name, and the title "Senior Paleontologist". The witness further claimed that she made only two copies of this business card and, after she gave them to she never saw the cards again.¹⁶ The witness was unable to provide us with copies of these cards, and as denied having them produced.

¹⁴ Specifically: his resume, a letter addressed to [REDACTED] security clearance [see Attachment 3].

a grant guide, and a letter regarding his supposed

stated that he purchased several fossils over the past year (he stated he could not recall how many) from the Discovery Channel Store in Atlanta, GA. said that he occasionally gave these fossils as gifts to his friends but that, before giving away these fossils, he would use a black felt tip marker to mark them with numbers (to catalog them in his own collection) and the letters "PRI". Though refused to admit to that he used this to further his impersonation, both the complainant and a witness alleged that claimed these fossils were from paleontology digs he was working on.

¹⁶ The witness made these business cards on a computer where both her and [REDACTED] were employed at the time.

er, where both her and [REDACTED]

Final [redacted] acknowledged that he had an entry in his electronic address book listing the office, car, and home telephone numbers for [redacted], the current Director of NSF. [redacted] he fabricated these telephone numbers and that he created this listing so that, if [redacted] his address book, they would be impressed with his NSF connections. In addition, [redacted] several entries listing bogus telephone numbers for various components of the fictitious PRI/NSF organization.

VI. Recommendations

[redacted] as clearly violated several federal statutes. Though no parties have suffered any direct financial loss as a result of [redacted] misrepresentation, his actions are still egregious. He went to such a great extent to convince people of his false identity (i.e. the creation of false identification and other documents), that he transcended exaggerating his real station in life and acted upon his delusions.¹⁷

[redacted] pattern of behavior is relevant to this case. Most striking is the fact that [redacted] currently on probation for a first degree forgery conviction in the State of Georgia. [redacted] was arrested on July 8, 1992 for attempting to cash checks he had stolen from his roommate [see Attachment 4] and was subsequently sentenced on October 8, 1992. [redacted] sentence was a \$400 fine, 40 hours of community service, and probation until October 8, 1996 (However, his probation has been extended until March 18, 1997 because of his failure to appear at designated meetings with his probation officer).¹⁸

In addition, on October 5, 1993, the [redacted] y sent a letter to [redacted] 's probation officer demanding that [redacted] cease misleading people about being affiliated with their organization [see Attachment 5]. Attached to the letter was a business card bearing the company name and logo and [redacted] name. However, [redacted] denied any knowledge of this incident [see Attachment 1].

In conclusion, because of [redacted] extreme efforts to impersonate an NSF program officer and his pattern of assuming false identities, we recommend that the United States Attorney bring criminal charges against [redacted] for violating 18 U.S.C. §§ 701, 912, and 1017. In addition, we believe the U.S. Attorney should coordinate these efforts with the Georgia State Probation Office to affect the future of [redacted] current probation.

¹⁷ Medical documents provided to us by the State of Georgia Probation Office indicate that, since 1992, [redacted] has twice been committed to the Georgia Regional Hospital at Atlanta, where he has been diagnosed as being manic depressive ("Bipolar disorder not otherwise specified"), potentially having a personality disorder, and having a hard time distinguishing fact from fiction.

[redacted] is also on probation in Georgia for an unrelated Simple Battery conviction [see Attachment 4]. The duration of this probation is from August 18, 1995 until August 18, 1996.

VII. Attachments

- (1) NSFOIG Report of Interview With
- (2) 10 Affidavits Signed by
- (3) Affidavit Exhibits Initialed by
- (4) Police Records Pertaining to
- (5) Letter From the

re

Regarding Misrepresentations by