



City of Placentia Press Release

For Immediate Release

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FORMER CITY EMPLOYEE PLEADS GUILTY TO EMBEZZLEMENT *Two New Suspects Named in Crimes*

PLACENTIA, CA –Michael Nguyen, a former employee of the City of Placentia’s Finance Department pleaded guilty today for his role in the embezzlement and misappropriation of \$5.16 million in public funds. During today’s pretrial hearing in the Central Division Court in Santa Ana, Mr. Nguyen accepted the court’s offer of 25 years, by admitting to committing dozens of felonies including numerous counts of embezzlement and money laundering. He has agreed to pay approximately \$10 million in fines and \$2.6 million in restitution.

The City has been working closely with the Orange County District Attorney’s Office to prosecute Mr. Nguyen and recover the stolen funds. At this time, the City has recovered \$3.16 million and an additional \$1 million dollar insurance claim is being processed.

“We are relieved Mr. Nguyen has confessed to his crimes against the City of Placentia. We are one step closer to bringing closure to the city and its residents. We hope his arrest and prosecution sends a clear message that these types of activities will not be tolerated in our City,” said City Administrator Damien R. Arrula. “We are grateful for the Orange County District Attorney’s Office for its aggressive efforts to investigate and pursue justice in this matter.”

“Mr. Nguyen committed the worst violation of public trust,” said Placentia Mayor Craig Green. “Justice has been served today. This has been a very difficult time for the residents, the City Council, and City Staff. We look forward to putting this behind us,” said Mayor Green.

Prosecutors are targeting two suspects believe to have been associated with Mr. Nguyen. Arrest warrants have been issued for Michael McDonald, a Las Vegas high roller and Herbert Trotter, a Los Angeles financial executive who are suspected of receiving some of the embezzled money. “Our City will continue to work with the Orange County District Attorney’s Office to address the misuse of taxpayer money, recover any outstanding funds, and ensure that justice is delivered for our residents,” said City Administrator Arrula.

To maintain the public’s trust and integrity, the City has strengthened its internal financial controls. A forensic accountant from the District Attorney’s Office has been assisting the City with evaluating the loss and recovery of funds. Additionally, the City hired a forensic auditor to conduct its own comprehensive review of the City’s internal controls. All findings and recommendations from the investigations will be presented to the City Council at a public meeting.

To read the victim impact statement read in court today, please [click here](#). For more information on this case, please visit www.placentia.org.

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