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Jenifer O'Neal Faces Sentencing Today in Mon Ethos Corruption Case After Court Rejects Bid to Seal Defense Filing

The former OMB director is set to be sentenced after her December conviction on honest services wire fraud, federal program bribery and money laundering conspiracy charges tied to the Mon Ethos contract scheme.,

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Former OMB Director Jenifer O'Neal. By. V.I. LEGISLATURE.

Former Office of Management and Budget Director Jenifer O'Neal is scheduled to be sentenced today in federal court, nearly six months after a jury convicted her in the public corruption case tied to the Mon Ethos Pro Support contract and inflated invoice scheme.

Ms. O’Neal’s sentencing comes two days after former V.I. Police Commissioner Ray Martinez, her co-defendant, was sentenced to 10 years in federal prison for his role in the same corruption case. Mr. Martinez was also ordered to serve three years of supervised release, pay restitution, a fine and special assessments, and was subjected to a forfeiture money judgment.

Ms. O’Neal was convicted on December 11, 2025, alongside Mr. Martinez following a federal corruption trial in St. Thomas. The jury found her guilty of honest services wire fraud, bribery concerning programs receiving federal funds, and conspiracy to commit money laundering. Mr. Martinez was convicted of those offenses as well as obstruction of justice.

The case centered on the relationship between former government contractor David Whitaker, Mr. Martinez and Ms. O’Neal. Prosecutors said Mr. Whitaker, through Mon Ethos Pro Support, traded personal benefits for official action connected to government payments and contracts, including a nearly \$1.5 million contract with the Virgin Islands Police Department funded through the federal American Rescue Plan Act.

According to the government’s case, Mr. Martinez and Ms. O’Neal participated in a scheme involving inflated invoices and personal benefits, including proceeds that were later used for expenses connected to Ms. O’Neal’s coffee shop, Java Grande.

In a May 28 memorandum denying post-trial relief, U.S. District Judge Mark A. Kearney declined to set aside the jury’s verdicts. The court wrote that the jury “unanimously found each former senior government official guilty as charged,” and stated that the evidence presented at trial supported the convictions.

The court’s memorandum described evidence including text messages, bank records, recorded calls, wire transfers and testimony from Mr. Whitaker. It referenced a January 2024 text exchange in which Mr. Whitaker asked Ms. O’Neal whether a Police Department “invoice for \$216k has processed” and referenced an additional \$70,000 line item. The memorandum states that Ms. O’Neal replied “lol” and said she would check with her staff concerning the invoice.

The court also referenced evidence that Mr. Whitaker used proceeds from the \$70,000 invoice amount for expenses connected to Mr. Martinez and Ms. O’Neal. In another portion of the memorandum, the court cited communications related to a lease payment for Java Grande, including Ms. O’Neal’s statement that “I don’t like traces of anything” and “[w]ire means it’s traced.”

Judge Kearney rejected Ms. O’Neal’s post-trial arguments challenging the sufficiency of the evidence for her convictions. The court found that the jury could conclude that she agreed to accept a future reward before action was taken on a government transaction, and also rejected her arguments seeking a new trial based on alleged prejudice from being tried with Mr. Martinez.

Ahead of today’s sentencing, the court also addressed a late request from Ms. O’Neal to seal her sentencing memorandum and letters of support. In a June 10 order, Judge Kearney granted the motion in part and denied it in part, finding no basis to block public access to issues required to be resolved in open court after reviewing the materials in camera.

The court ordered Ms. O’Neal to “forthwith” file her proposed sentencing memorandum, including any request for a variance and any letters of support she wanted the court to consider, with redactions limited only to the street addresses of those who submitted support letters.

The United States opposed Ms. O’Neal’s sealing request. The court’s order means the sentencing filing and support letters must be placed on the public docket, with only limited redactions.

Federal prosecutors have recommended a seven-year prison sentence for Ms. O’Neal. The defense is expected to argue for a lesser sentence, including through its sentencing memorandum and letters of support.

Today’s hearing is the latest in a series of sentencings connected to public corruption cases involving Mr. Whitaker, the former Mon Ethos principal who became a cooperating witness for the government.

Ms. O’Neal’s sentencing will determine the penalty she faces for her role in the scheme, including any term of imprisonment, supervised release, restitution, fines or other financial penalties the court may impose.