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ELEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Former Clerk of Courts Supervisor Charged in Filing Fees Thefts Allegedly Stole Court Fees Over 2-Year Period

Miami (December 13, 2021) - Miami-Dade State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle and Miami-Dade County Inspector General Felix Jimenez announce the arrest of 35-year-old Tyrone Derise Smith, Jr., a former Acting Supervisor in the office of the Miami-Dade County Clerk of Courts (COC). Smith served almost 11 years as an employee in the New Suits Section of the Family Court Division until he resigned his employment, via email, on June 4, 2018. At that point in time, an internal COC review had been initiated due to the discovery of missing funds intended for deposit at a local bank.

“When government employees steal, they not only grab the public’s money, but they squander the public’s trust in their local government,” said State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle. “Such actions betray our community and can never be accepted or tolerated.”

Tyrone Derise Smith, Jr. has been charged with:

- 1 Count - Grand Theft over \$100,000 (1st Degree Felony)
- 1 Count - Organized Scheme to Defraud over \$50,000 (1st Degree Felony)

The missing deposit funds review received an unexpected impetus after a customer came to the New Suits Section on June 8, 2018, to complain about the lack of movement of his civil case through the court system. A COC database review showed that the individual’s case, originally processed by Smith, showed a lack of payment of the required filing fee. The customer insisted that the proper filing fee had been paid in cash and produced his COC receipt as proof of payment. However, the official-looking receipt was an obvious fake since it was not printed on thermal paper as are the official COC receipts.

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The missing deposit funds, coupled with this new filing fee discrepancy, prompted COC administrative staff to conduct an internal audit of all of Smith's transactions between August 2016 through April 2018 and to ask the Miami-Dade County Inspector General for investigative assistance. The audit and the investigation revealed 201 cases processed by Smith that appeared in the database as filed cases yet failed to show collected filing fees. The filing fees for these 201 cases, paid in cash, totaled \$80,817. Some of these customers provided similar COC receipts, which were also fraudulent. A subsequent search of Smith's work computer allegedly revealed a saved form which could produce the same fraudulent receipt as was provided by the COC customers.

Tyrone Derise Smith, Jr. is being charged with using his position as an employee of the COC to allegedly engage in an Organized Scheme to Defraud by knowingly participating in an ongoing course of conduct which allowed him to allegedly steal filing fees paid by COC customers to file new suits totaling \$80,817, and COC deposit funds collected during May 16, 17, 21 and 23, 2018 totaling \$28,121.16. The total financial loss to the State of Florida and the Miami-Dade County Clerk of Courts was \$108,938.16.

Inspector General Felix Jimenez stated: "The Office of the Inspector General continues to work with the Office of the Clerk of Courts and County departments to implement measures to avert incidents like this from happening again. Please contact the OIG if you suspect fraud, waste or abuse in County government."

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