



**U.S. Department of Justice**  
*United States Attorney's Office*  
*Southern District of Georgia*

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*Post Office Box 8970*

*100 Bull Street*

*Savannah, GA 31412*

*/Savannah, GA 31401*

*(912) 652-4422 / FAX (912) 652-4388*

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Contact: James D. Durham  
(912) 652-4422

**SAVANNAH ATTORNEY BENJAMIN EICHHOLZ PLEADS GUILTY TO**  
**OBSTRUCTION OF JUSTICE**

**SAVANNAH, GA.** Edward J. Tarver, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Georgia, announced today the guilty plea of Savannah attorney Benjamin Eichholz, age 58, in United States District Court before Chief District Judge William T. Moore, Jr. Eichholz pled guilty to count fifty-five of a seventy-seven count indictment, which count charged Obstruction of Justice in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1505.

The seventy-seven count indictment against Eichholz was returned by a Federal Grand Jury in August 2009, and alleged that from 2001 to 2008, Eichholz embezzled more than \$950,000 from two employee pension and retirement plans at the Eichholz Law Firm; filed false documents with the United States Department of Labor relating to the pension and retirement plans; and then, as part of an effort to cover up his embezzlement, knowingly provided false information and committed other acts of obstruction during a Department of Labor investigation.

At the Eichholz Rule 11 hearing, the evidence showed that in February 2007, the United States Department of Labor began an investigation of the pension and retirement plans at the Eichholz Law Firm to determine whether Eichholz was embezzling from the plans and using the plans' assets for his own interests. During the course of the investigation, an investigator from the Department of Labor interviewed Eichholz. In response to questioning, Eichholz knowingly

made false statements about what he was doing with the money invested in the two plans, all in an effort to obstruct the Department of Labor investigation.

Based on his plea of guilty to Obstruction of Justice, Eichholz faces a maximum statutory penalty of five (5) years imprisonment; a fine of \$250,000; and three (3) years of supervised release. In addition, as part of his plea agreement with the Government, Eichholz will be required to make restitution to certain participants in the Eichholz Law Firm pension and retirement plans. Eichholz remains free on bond pending sentence. A sentencing date will be scheduled following completion of a presentence investigation and report by the United States Probation Office.

The investigation of Eichholz was conducted by agents with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, United States Department of Labor and the Internal Revenue Service. The Government was represented by Brian Rafferty, Natalie Lee and Jim Durham, Assistant United States Attorneys for the Southern District of Georgia.