

Conservative Author Dinesh D'Souza Pleads Guilty In Campaign Finance Case

By Administrator

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NEW YORK (AP) — A conservative scholar behind a high-grossing film condemning President Barack Obama pleaded guilty Tuesday to making illegal campaign contributions to a U.S. Senate candidate in New York.

Dinesh D'Souza, 53, of San Diego, entered the plea in federal court in Manhattan on the day his trial was to begin, admitting he had two close associates each contribute \$10,000 to Wendy Long's campaign with the understanding that he would reimburse them. "I did reimburse them," D'Souza told U.S. District Judge Richard M. Berman. "I knew that causing a campaign contribution to be made in the name of another was wrong and something the law forbids. I deeply regret my conduct."

A plea agreement D'Souza signed calls for him not to challenge any sentence within the range of 10 months to 16 months.

His attorney, Benjamin Brafman, said in a statement immediately after the plea that he was hopeful that the judge "will recognize Mr. D'Souza to be a fundamentally honorable man who should not be imprisoned for what was an isolated instance of wrongdoing in an otherwise productive life." Sentencing was set for Sept. 23.

Long, who lost the 2012 election to the Democratic incumbent, Kirsten Gillibrand, was prepared to testify against D'Souza, said Assistant U.S. Attorney Carrie Cohen.

D'Souza, who made the documentary "2016: Obama's America," entered the plea a week after the judge turned down his claim that he was selectively prosecuted. Berman said D'Souza had shown the court no evidence that he was targeted.

The government said in court papers that D'Souza faced overwhelming evidence of guilt and "now seizes upon the fact that he is an outspoken critic of the Obama administration as an excuse to avoid the consequences of his actions."

In court, Cohen identified the donors as Tyler Vawser, who worked for D'Souza, and Denise Joseph.

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In court papers, the government said D'Souza was living with Joseph and having an extramarital affair with her, although at times she did work for him.

In October 2012, D'Souza resigned as president of The King's College after an evangelical magazine reported that he brought Joseph to a conference in South Carolina where he spoke. D'Souza said at the time that he and his wife had been separated since 2010.

The King's College was located in the Empire State Building before it moved in 2012 to lower Manhattan. It promotes itself as shaping young Christians as future leaders in business, politics, finance and media.

D'Souza is a former policy analyst under President Ronald Reagan and a prolific author known most recently for works critical of Obama.