

STATE OF MARYLAND

*

IN THE

v.

*

CIRCUIT COURT FOR

ERICA GRISWOLD,

*

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY

Defendant.

*

CASE NO.:

* * * * *

CRIMINAL INDICTMENT

The Grand Jurors of the State of Maryland for the Body of Anne Arundel County do on their Oath present the following:

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

At all times relevant to this Indictment:

1. The Register of Wills for Anne Arundel County is a Maryland State agency, the purpose of which is to offer protection to decedents and their heirs, legatees, and creditors by ensuring that their wishes are carried out and they receive the monies and property to which they are entitled. The Register of Wills is responsible for ensuring that the proper inheritance taxes and fees are collected on behalf of the State of Maryland.

2. Erica Griswold (hereinafter “GRISWOLD”) was elected as the Register of Wills for Anne Arundel County on November 8, 2022, and was sworn in on December 5, 2022. GRISWOLD’s annual salary from the State of Maryland is approximately \$146,117.91.

3. The Office of the Anne Arundel County Register of Wills (the “Office”) consists of the following positions: a Chief Deputy, approximately five supervisors, and approximately twenty-eight other employees.

4. On or about June 16, 2023, a cashier’s check in the amount of \$6,645.00 (the “check”) was received at the Office of the Register of Wills in Annapolis, Maryland. The remitter of the check was the beneficiary of an open estate (ESTATE 1) within the Office, and the check was made

payable to GRISWOLD for the purpose of satisfying an invoice received from the Office for payment of non-probate inheritance tax.

5. At approximately 12:43 p.m. on or about June 22, 2023, at the Chase Bank located on Forest Drive in Annapolis, Maryland, GRISWOLD cashed the \$6,645.00 check, exchanging it for its full value in cash and permitting GRISWOLD to spend the money immediately.

6. On or about August 4, 2023, the remitter of the check contacted the Office inquiring why he was still receiving invoices for an inheritance tax due in the amount of \$6,645.00 when he had already paid the tax via the check mailed to the Office.

7. On August 4, 2023, GRISWOLD was made aware that the remitter of the check had contacted the Office inquiring as to why he was continuing to receive invoices for the ESTATE 1 inheritance tax.

8. Beginning on August 4, 2023, and continuing for several months thereafter, numerous employees of the Office communicated to GRISWOLD the importance of repaying the \$6,645.00.

9. As of January 24, 2024, GRISWOLD had still not re-paid any of the \$6,645.00 owed to the State of Maryland for the payment of inheritance tax owed on ESTATE 1.

COUNT ONE
(Misconduct in Office)

10. On or about June 22, 2023, in Anne Arundel County, Maryland, ERICA GRISWOLD, in violation and perversion of her duties as the duly elected Register of Wills for Anne Arundel County, did corruptly commit misconduct in office by knowingly, willfully, and intentionally cashing a \$6,645.00 check intended for payment to the Office of the Register of Wills for inheritance tax of an estate using her personal account, in violation of the Common Law of Maryland and against the peace, government, and dignity of the State.

Common Law
CJIS Code 2-0645
Penalty: Anything not cruel and unusual

COUNT TWO
(Misappropriation by Fiduciary)

11. On or about June 22, 2023, in Anne Arundel County, Maryland, ERICA GRISWOLD, being a fiduciary of the Register of Wills of Anne Arundel County did fraudulently and willfully appropriate to a use not in the due and lawful execution of her trust, money held by her in her fiduciary capacity, to wit: GRISWOLD, being the duly elected Register of Wills, and having a duty to ensure that the wishes of decedents are carried out and their heirs, legatees and creditors receive the money they are entitled to and that the proper taxes and fees will be collected for the State of Maryland, cashed a \$6,645.00 check intended for the Office of the Register of Wills for payment of inheritance tax, for her personal use and benefit, in violation of Criminal Law Article, § 7-113 of the *Annotated Code of Maryland*, and against the peace, government, and dignity of the State.

CR 7-113
CJIS Code 1-2799
Penalty: Not less than 1 year and not exceeding 5 years

COUNT THREE
(Theft \$1,500 to Under \$25,000)

12. On or about June 22, 2023, in Anne Arundel County, Maryland, ERICA GRISWOLD, did steal \$6,645.00, money intended for the Office of the Register of Wills for payment of inheritance tax to the State of Maryland, having a value of at least \$1,500 but less than \$25,000, in violation of Criminal Law Article, § 7-104 of the *Annotated Code of Maryland*, and against the peace, government, and dignity of the State.

CR 7-104
CJIS Code 1-1139
Penalty: Not exceeding 5 years and/or \$10,000