



Often It's Not the Crime, It's the Cover-Up

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On November 12, 2010, Prince Georges County Executive Jack Johnson and his wife, incoming Prince Georges County Councilmember Leslie Johnson, were arrested by the FBI on charges of tampering with and destroying evidence in a political corruption probe.

As has been widely reported, FBI agents found \$76,000 in cash in Leslie Johnson's underwear, allegedly the proceeds of a bribe. The case remains pending as the FBI continues to investigate Jack Johnson and others, and the U.S. Attorney has called the current charges the "tip of the iceberg." It has been reported that the U.S. Attorney and the FBI are looking into a possible bribery scheme involving a major development project near the Greenbelt Metro station.

Other arrests have followed, and there will no doubt be more. The Johnsons and everyone else charged is entitled to the presumption of innocence, and we will continue to observe the case as it develops. But this case appears to be just the latest example of the well-known principle that it is often easier to charge and convict someone of cover-up crimes such as perjury, false statements, witness tampering, hiding evidence, and the like, than of the underlying crimes.

This goes back as far as Watergate, where the cover-up rather than the initial break-in was what forced President Nixon's resignation, and it occurred as recently as the Roger Clemens case this year, where the former pitcher was charged with lying to Congress about steroids use, rather than with using the drugs.

Human nature being what it is, people will always try to cover their tracks and to interfere with the judicial process. But in doing so, they make life easier for prosecutors.

Crime in the Suites is authored by the [Ifrah Law Firm](#), a Washington DC-based law firm specializing in the defense of government investigations and litigation. Our client base spans many regulated industries, particularly e-business, e-commerce, government contracts, gaming and healthcare.

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