

Prosecution v. Lee R. Raymond

Overview

Lee R. Raymond, a former mid-level manager of a national construction company, was indicted on a charge of fraudulent misrepresentation, embezzlement, and manipulation of financial records and corporate funds to divert the company money into a personal account while involved in a large urban redevelopment project. A whistleblower who was a senior employee in the organization informed senior management when he suspected unexplained bank payments labelled as payouts to vendors that were cumulatively more than what was agreed in his contract. The anticipated case is that Raymond set up shell companies between 2022 and 2024 and provided falsified invoices of services not provided, stealing about \$2.5 million out of the firm. Account statements indicated that the same money was paid by the company multiple times into accounts he had control over then supposedly used to make personal purchases like seaside resorts and houses. The plan was exposed when the auditors explored the increase in cost in the project and found the difference between expenses reported and work done. Upon the internal investigation, Raymond was suspended and officially indicted. Although the prosecution asserts that Raymond intentionally manipulated the scam and misused his authority to enrich himself, the defense asserts that all the payments were within discretionary policies, and any discrepancies were nothing beyond the administration errors or criminality. Whether deliberate or not, the case became a high-profile example of corporate responsibility, and raised the question of the relation between executive flexibility and the stringent financial control of large-scale development projects.

Timeline

- **1970s–1980s** : Exxon's internal research confirms fossil fuels cause climate change.
- **1990s–2000s** : Under Raymond's leadership, ExxonMobil allegedly funds misinformation campaigns denying climate science.
- **2006** : Raymond retires, leaving a legacy of climate controversy.
- **2010s–2020s** : Rising climate disasters disproportionately impact developing nations.

Charges (Rome Statute)

- **Article 7** (Crimes Against Humanity)

- **Article 8 bis** (Crime of Aggression)

Key Terms

- **Corporate Accountability in International Law** : Debate on whether CEOs can be prosecuted at ICC.
- **Ecocide** : Proposed fifth core international crime, targeting severe environmental destruction.
- **Climate Refugees** : People forced to flee due to climate disasters.
- **Greenwashing** : Corporate deception presenting harmful policies as environmentally responsible.

Useful Resources

1. <https://www.icc-cpi.int/sites/default/files/2024-05/Rome-Statute-eng.pdf>
2. <https://insideclimatenews.org/book/exxon-the-road-not-taken/>
3. <https://ir.exxonmobil.com/management/lee-raymond/>
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2023/sep/14/exxonmobil-documents-wall-street-journal-climate-science>