



Department of Justice

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CHATSWORTH WOMAN CHARGED WITH STEALING MORE THAN \$1 MILLION FROM HER EMPLOYER

Forged Her Supervisor's Signature To Pay Her Credit Card Bills

ROME, GA - CAROLYN LYNN CHERRY, 63, of Chatsworth, Georgia, was arraigned today and released on her own recognizance before United States Magistrate Judge Walter E. Johnson. CHERRY, the former bookkeeper for a Dalton insurance business, faces federal charges of mail fraud and bank fraud in connection with her alleged theft of over \$1 million from her employer.

“The indictment charges that the defendant caused a serious financial harm to a small business,” said Acting United States Attorney Sally Quillian Yates. “The United States Attorney’s Office remains committed to investigating and prosecuting those who use the mail, the telephone or the Internet to commit fraud and theft.”

“Let this indictment serve notice of the U.S. Secret Service's commitment to investigate embezzlement and fraud cases to protect local businesses and banks,” said Jeffrey T. Gilbert, Special Agent in Charge of the United States Secret Service Atlanta Field Office. “This case demonstrates both the wide-reaching effects of embezzlement, its impact on innocent victims, and the importance of cooperation among our local area businesses and law enforcement partners.”

According to Acting United States Attorney Yates, the charges and other information presented in court, CHERRY began working for a company identified in the documents as "R.I.," an insurance broker in Dalton, in March 2003, soon after the company began operating. Between May 2003 and August 2009, she allegedly forged her supervisor's signature on company checks and used them to pay her personal credit card bills, which totaled more than \$1 million. CHERRY allegedly used forged checks to pay Citibank approximately \$510,996; Chase/Washington Mutual, \$416,406; and Capital One, \$74,039. She allegedly used her credit cards to pay for several trips to Disney World and Disney resorts, as well as trips to New York, Washington, D.C., and numerous beach and river destinations between Myrtle Beach and Honolulu. In addition, she allegedly used her credit cards to buy hundreds of items from television shopping networks. In addition, CHERRY allegedly wrote three company checks payable to herself, for a total of approximately \$11,300, and cashed them.

CHERRY was indicted by a federal grand jury on January 12, 2010. The indictment charges her with 24 counts of mail fraud in connection with her use of the U.S. Postal Service to pay her credit card bills, and 3 counts of bank fraud, in connection with her cashing of forged company checks. The mail fraud charges are punishable by a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000 per count. The bank fraud charges are punishable by a maximum penalty of 30 years in prison and a fine of \$1 million per count. In determining the actual sentence in this case, the Court will consider the United States Sentencing Guidelines, which are not binding, but which provide appropriate sentencing ranges for most offenders.

Members of the public are reminded that the indictment only contains charges. The defendant is presumed innocent of the charges and it will be the government's burden to prove the defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt at trial.

This case is being investigated by Special Agents of the United States Secret Service and the Dalton Police Department.

Assistant United States Attorney William G. Traynor is prosecuting the case.

For further information please contact Sally Q. Yates, Acting United States Attorney, or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is www.usdoj.gov/usao/ga.