



**United States Department of Justice
United States Attorney's Office
District of Minnesota**

**B. Todd Jones,
United States Attorney**

**Jeanne F. Cooney
Director of Community Relations
(612) 664-5611
email: jeanne.cooney@usdoj.gov**

News Release

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Christi Rowan sentenced for criminal activity related to the Hecker bankruptcy case

Earlier today in federal court in Minneapolis, Christi Michele Rowan, age 37, of Wayzata, was sentenced to 14 months in federal prison for making a false statement in Dennis Hecker's bankruptcy case and defrauding a federal credit union while seeking an automobile loan. United States District Court Judge Joan N. Ericksen sentenced Christi Michele Rowan on one count of bankruptcy fraud and one count of bank fraud. Rowan was charged on April 9, 2010, and pleaded guilty on April 20, 2010.

In her plea agreement, Rowan admitted that on October 13, 2009, she provided false testimony under oath during a Rule 2004 examination conducted by the U.S. Trustee in the Hecker bankruptcy case. Rowan falsely testified that she made more than \$150,000 per year as an employee of Gannett, when, in fact, she did not. In addition, Rowan admitted that on April 9, 2009, she defrauded Endura Financial Federal Credit Union by submitting a false loan application for a 2008 Land Rover. The application included a false and fraudulent 2008 W-2 Wage and Tax Statement as well as other false statements provided by Rowan regarding the nature and duration of her employment.

Judge Ericksen gave Rowan the maximum sentence within the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines range because she found that Rowan stole assets from Hecker's bankruptcy estate and the court.

Following today's sentencing, Ralph S. Boelter, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Minneapolis Office, said, "Despite Ms. Rowan's guilty pleas to fraud charges, she continued to engage in similar conduct after being placed on release. This case demonstrates the resolve of the FBI and its partners – the Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigation Division ("IRS-CID") and the Minnesota State Patrol – to continue investigations of defendants who fail to comply with court directives."

On February 11, 2011, Hecker was sentenced to 120 months in prison for crimes committed in connection with his scheme to defraud financial lenders and others out of millions of dollars. In addition, Hecker was ordered to pay more than \$31 million in restitution. Hecker co-defendants Steven Joseph Leach and James Carl Gustafson were also recently sentenced.

This case was the result of an investigation by the Minnesota State Patrol, the IRS-CID, and the FBI. It was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Nicole A. Engisch, Nancy E. Brasel, and David M. Genrich.

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