

## **Chillicothe Couple Plead Guilty To Theft, Money Laundering, False Tax Return** **News**

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KANSAS CITY, Mo. — A Chillicothe, Mo., husband and wife pleaded guilty in federal court today to charges involving the wife's embezzlement of nearly \$4 million from her employer and their jointly filing a false income tax return not claiming the income from the wire fraud scheme.



Donna M. Preszler, 60, and her husband, Terrance W. Preszler, 63, both of Chillicothe, pleaded guilty before U.S. Magistrate Judge Robert E. Larsen. Donna Preszler pleaded guilty to wire fraud, money laundering and filing a false income tax return. Terrance Preszler pleaded guilty to filing a false income tax return.

Donna Preszler was employed at Burdg, Dunham & Associates Construction Corp. (BDA) in Hamilton, Mo., from 2001 until June 2012, working as an accounting manager since 2004. BDA is a general contractor specializing in retail construction of malls, strip centers, family life centers, and other stand-alone projects. BDA serves customers in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and Canada, primarily building for national retail organizations.

Donna Preszler admitted that she embezzled \$3,912,000 in a wire fraud scheme that lasted six years, from June 30, 2006 through June 15, 2012. She also admitted that she conducted financial transactions that involved the proceeds of her criminal activity.

Donna and Terrance Preszler each admitted that they failed to report the fraudulently obtained funds on their federal income tax returns for tax years 2007 through 2012. During that time, the Preszlers filed their federal income tax returns jointly and should have paid \$1,236,690 in taxes on their unreported fraudulent income from BDA. For example, the Preszlers claimed their income in 2012 was only \$46,863. Including the embezzled funds, according to today's plea agreements, their income was actually \$851,863 and they should have paid an additional \$253,641 in taxes.

Donna Preszler utilized her role as accounting manager to add false and fictitious non-taxable payments, such as expense reimbursements, to herself. Donna Preszler transferred approximately \$3,912,000 in fraudulent payments to herself and her family.

Donna Preszler also added false and fictitious overtime hours and overtime pay to her weekly payroll. Donna Preszler received \$137,121 in unauthorized overtime payments to herself from November 2004 through June 2006, which were subject to BDA withholding income taxes.

Donna Preszler concealed her transfers by password protecting her payroll information, creating false and fictitious expense accounts and otherwise manipulating BDA's payroll and accounting records.

Under the terms of today's plea agreements, the Preszlers must forfeit to the government any property derived from the proceeds of the criminal violations, including a money judgment of \$3,912,000, two residential lots, two 14kt diamond rings, 10 vehicles (a 2007 Ford Taurus, a 2007 Mazda CX-7, a 2011 Nissan Versa, a 2010 Nissan 370Z, a 2011 Ford F150, a 2010 Ford F150, a 2010 Ford Escape, a 2012 Ford Explorer and a 2012 Nissan Rogue), three 2011 Yamaha ATVs and several bank accounts and funeral trust accounts. Most of those items have been seized by law enforcement agents.

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Under federal statutes, Donna Preszler is subject to a sentence of up to 33 years in federal prison without parole, plus a fine up to \$600,000 and an order of restitution. Terrance Preszler is subject to a sentence of up to three years in federal prison without parole, plus a fine up to \$100,000 and an order of restitution. Sentencing hearings will be scheduled after the completion of a presentence investigation by the United States Probation Office.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jess E. Michaelsen. It was investigated by the FBI and IRS-Criminal Investigation.