



## United States Attorney's Office District of Connecticut Press Release

**August 22, 2007 BLOOMFIELD WOMAN ADMITS EMBEZZLING \$687,674 FROM LAW  
FIRM EMPLOYER, EMPLOYER'S MOTHER**

*Defendant also fails to pay \$142,259 in federal taxes*

Kevin J. O'Connor, United States Attorney for the District of Connecticut, announced that KAREN DAVIS-JENNINGS, age 43, of Bloomfield, Connecticut, waived indictment and pleaded guilty today before United States District Judge Christopher F. Droney in Hartford to federal charges related to a scheme through which she embezzled approximately \$687,674.77 from her former employer and his elderly mother. Specifically, DAVIS-JENNINGS pleaded guilty to three counts of mail fraud and one count of filing a false tax return.

According to documents filed with the Court and statements made in court, DAVIS-JENNINGS was an employee of a law firm in West Hartford, Connecticut. The firm is a sole proprietorship owned by a principal who employs approximately five other attorneys. Between approximately 1997 and May 2005, DAVIS-JENNINGS worked as a paralegal and bookkeeper for the law office. In addition, as part of her responsibilities at the law firm, DAVIS-JENNINGS also handled some personal finances for the principal and his mother, an elderly woman who suffers from dementia.

In pleading guilty, DAVIS-JENNINGS admitted that, between approximately September 1998 and May 2005, she devised a scheme to defraud the law office, its principal and the principal's elderly mother of approximately \$687,674.77, and spent the money on personal expenses. As part of the scheme, DAVIS-JENNINGS wrote checks on the law office's operating account, over which she had signatory authority, to pay for her mortgage and credit card bills. In order to conceal the theft of the funds from the operating account, DAVIS-JENNINGS falsified entries in the law firm's accounting system. In addition, DAVIS-JENNINGS wrote checks on a joint account in the name of the principal and his mother to pay for her personal expenses. DAVIS-JENNINGS did not have signatory authority on the account and forged the signature of the principal's mother.

As part of the scheme, on approximately August 15, 1999, DAVIS-JENNINGS, without the authority and without the knowledge of the principal, activated a debit card connected to the joint account and used the debit card to pay for personal expenses, including but not limited to gambling expenses at the Mohegan Sun Casino. DAVIS-JENNINGS also falsely reported that she worked overtime for the law firm, which resulted in a payroll service issuing checks to her in the amount of \$96,788 for hours that she never worked.

Finally, DAVIS-JENNINGS filed false income tax returns for the years 2001 through 2004. The approximate tax loss to the Government for those years is approximately \$142,259.

Judge Droney has scheduled sentencing for November 9, 2007, at which time DAVIS-JENNINGS faces a maximum term of imprisonment of 20 years and a fine of up to \$250,000 on each mail fraud charge, and a maximum term of imprisonment of three years and a fine of up to \$100,000 on the charge of filing a false tax return.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Internal Revenue Service – Criminal Investigation Division, and the West Hartford Police Department. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Nora R. Dannehy.

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