



*United States Attorney
Southern District of New York*

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CONTACT: U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
MARVIN SMILON, HERBERT HADAD,
MICHAEL KULSTAD
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
(212) 637-2600

**U.S. CHARGES HUSBAND AND WIFE WITH EMBEZZLING \$5 MILLION;
PAIR APPREHENDED AFTER SIX-MONTH FLIGHT FROM JUSTICE**

DAVID N. KELLEY, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that an Indictment was returned today in Manhattan federal court charging WENDIE LAURIOLA and her husband, SALVATORE LAURIOLA, in connection with a scheme in which they embezzled more than \$5.5 million from WENDIE LAURIOLA's employer, the owner of Troon Management, a New York real estate management firm, over a 10-year period.

In June 2003, a Magistrate Judge issued warrants for the arrest of WENDIE LAURIOLA and SALVATORE LAURIOLA in connection with their role in the alleged scheme. According to court proceedings, the LAURIOLAS fled the country in June 2003 to avoid apprehension and relocated to Costa Rica. The LAURIOLAS were taken into custody on January 5, 2004, as they crossed into Arizona from Mexico.

The Indictment charges that, between about November 1994 and May 2003, WENDIE LAURIOLA embezzled in excess of \$5 million

from the Victim by forging the Victim's signature on checks from the Victim's personal bank accounts. The Indictment charges that the forged checks were made payable to, among others, WENDIE LAURIOLA, SALVATORE LAURIOLA, Lauri Enterprises (SALVATORE LAURIOLA's business), WENDIE LAURIOLA's daughter, and various credit card issuers. The Indictment further charges that WENDIE LAURIOLA and SALVATORE LAURIOLA used the proceeds of the embezzlement scheme to enrich themselves by, among other things, purchasing a second home in South Carolina for approximately \$420,000.

According to the Indictment, between about 1994 and about May 2003, WENDIE LAURIOLA was employed as a secretary and administrative assistant by Troon Management, a New York real estate management company owned by the Victim. WENDIE LAURIOLA was responsible for managing the company's bank accounts and maintaining the office computer. WENDIE LAURIOLA was also responsible for administering the Victim's personal finances, including paying the Victim's bills, maintaining certain minimum balances in the Victim's personal bank accounts, and retrieving and reconciling the Victim's monthly bank account statements.

According to court papers, between November 16, 2001, and June 13, 2003, almost all of checks deposited into the account of SALVATORE LAURIOLA's business - Lauri Enterprises - were drawn on the Victim's accounts. Between November 16, 2001, and June 13, 2003, there were deposits of approximately \$856,214 in checks payable to Lauri Enterprises and drawn from the Victim's personal

and business accounts.

The Indictment charges WENDIE LAURIOLA and SALVATORE LAURIOLA with three counts, including one count of conspiracy, one count of bank fraud, and one count of interstate transportation of stolen moneys.

If convicted, WENDIE LAURIOLA and SALVATORE LAURIOLA each face a maximum sentence of 5 years in jail and a \$250,000 fine or twice the gross gain or loss from the offense on the conspiracy count; a maximum sentence of 30 years in jail and a \$1 million fine on the bank fraud count; and a maximum sentence of 10 years in jail and a \$250,000 fine or twice the gross gain or loss from the offense on the interstate transportation of stolen moneys count.

The case was assigned to United States District Judge RICHARD J. HOLWELL.

Prior to their flight, WENDIE LAURIOLA, 55, and SALVATORE LAURIOLA, 55, resided in New Rochelle, New York.

Mr. KELLEY praised the Federal Bureau of Investigation for its efforts in the case.

Assistant United States Attorney ANDREW L. FISH is in charge of the prosecution.

The charges in the Indictment are merely accusations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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