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October 23, 2013

Company CFO Charged with Embezzling \$1.4 Million

Chester County District Attorney Tom Hogan and Tredyffrin Township Police Superintendent Anthony Giaimo announced the arrest of Guido la Vella. The defendant is the former Chief Financial Officer of Taylor Gifts, Inc. ("Taylor Gifts") located in Tredyffrin Township. The defendant is charged with embezzling over \$1.4 million from the company.

District Attorney Hogan stated, "The defendant abused his position of trust in the company to line his own pockets. While Americans everywhere were struggling to find jobs and make ends meet, the defendant was living the high life by stealing from his own employer. This was not a crime of need, it was a crime of simple greed."

Tredyffrin Township Police Superintendent Anthony Giaimo stated, "We see that again due to a great working relationship and partnership, Chester County law enforcement agencies were able to work a complex financial case to a very successful conclusion. I would say that this should send a clear message that Chester County law enforcement is tough on crime. This case also reinforces the need to have trained investigators who can help protect Tredyffrin's businesses."

Taylor Gifts' CEO Frank Ruthkosky stated, "Taylor Gifts would like to thank the Tredyffrin Township Police Department and the Chester County Detectives for their diligent work in making this arrest. Taylor Gifts remains a strong and growing company. We look forward to seeing the defendant brought to justice."

The defendant is 29 years old. He resides at 212 Holbrook Lane, Gilbertsville, Pennsylvania.

The allegations of the criminal complaint are as follows:¹

The defendant was the CFO of Taylor Gifts. Taylor Gifts is a Tredyffrin-based company that specializes in providing direct order gifts to customers around the world.

From 2009 until his abrupt resignation in 2013, the defendant stole over \$1.4 million from the company. The theft was uncovered when a bank alerted Taylor Gifts that a large amount of money was being transferred out of a company account. The company checked and determined that the money was being moved from the company's account into the defendant's account.

Taylor Gifts then retained a financial consulting firm, Citrin Cooperman & Co., to perform a financial audit. Taylor Gifts also contacted law enforcement, triggering an investigation by the Tredyffrin Township Police Department and the Chester County Detectives.

The audit and investigation determined that the defendant was stealing money from Taylor Gifts mainly in two ways. First, the defendant was charging personal items to his credit card and then claiming reimbursement from the company as a business expense. Second, the defendant would issue duplicate reimbursement checks for certain expenses, pretend to void out one of the checks, but still retain the funds for himself. The defendant's position as CFO gave him access to the company's accounts and reimbursement procedures.

The defendant used the company's money to live a lavish lifestyle. He used the stolen funds to purchase high-end automobiles, including a BMW, Mercedes, Audi, and Fiat. The defendant spent \$48,000 of the company's money to attend a concert and meet-and-greet with the Dave Matthews Band. The defendant purchased jewelry from Tiffany's, season tickets to the Eagles, and other personal items at the company's expense.

The defendant has been charged with felony theft, forgery, and related offenses.

District Attorney Hogan added, "This case is another example of the necessity for all businesses to create tight accounting controls over expenses.

¹ A criminal defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty in court.

Payments need to be checked by multiple people and periodically reviewed by outside sources, such as accountants or auditors. Unfortunately, a determined insider often will be able to avoid detection for some period of time. But, as shown by the Tredyffrin Township Police Department and Chester County Detectives, we always catch up to the bad guys at the end of the day.”

This case was investigated by the Criminal Investigation Division of the Tredyffrin Township Police Department, with assistance from the Chester County Detectives. Assistant District Attorney Alexander Gosfield is assigned to prosecute this case.

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Approved for release:

Thomas P. Hogan