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Thomas P. Hogan
District Attorney

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PRESS RELEASE

**Arrest Made in Theft of Over \$900,000
from Farm in Willistown Township**

Chester County District Attorney Tom Hogan announced the arrest of Clifton Willson for theft and related offenses. The defendant was a part-time worker at a farm owned by the victims in Willistown Township, Chester County, PA. In February of 2016, the property owner discovered fraudulent checks were written and funds were withdrawn from her account. The total amount alleged to have been stolen is over \$900,000. The defendant used the stolen funds to purchase luxury vehicles, a trip to the Bahamas, and other personal expenses.

District Attorney Hogan stated, "The defendant took advantage of his position of trust. He stole checks, forged the victim's signature, and stole hundreds of thousands of dollars all because of simple greed."

Willistown Police Chief John Narcise stated, "This was excellent team work by law enforcement. The Willistown Police Department and Chester County Detectives worked together to investigate this case thoroughly and rapidly, making sure to protect the residents of Willistown. Unfortunately, this case is also a sad reminder that people and businesses need to be very careful about whom they trust."

The defendant is 35 years old. He resides in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania. He had worked as a painter at the farm in Willistown. He was terminated from his position as soon as these criminal allegations arose.

The allegations from the criminal complaint¹ are as follows:

In February of 2016, the victim noticed an unauthorized check for \$18,000 made out to the defendant. She alerted the Chester County Detectives and Willistown Police Department, who immediately began to investigate the matter.

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

Law enforcement discovered that between May 2014 and February 2016, the defendant was working part-time as a painter at the farm in Willistown. The defendant used his access to the property to steal 148 blank checks from the victim. The defendant then forged the victim's signature and deposited the checks in various personal accounts. The thefts ranged from forged checks for \$900 up to \$18,000 at a time. The total amount embezzled was \$927,100.

The defendant used the stolen money to pay for various personal items and expenses. These items included: two Maserati vehicles, a Porsche SUV, a Land Rover, a rental home, and a family vacation to the Bahamas.

District Attorney Hogan added, "The only good news here is that the defendant and his attorney were immediately cooperative. The defendant already has made in excess of \$500,000 in restitution. Acceptance of responsibility is always a factor that the District Attorney's Office considers in the ultimate disposition of a case."

The defendant's bail is \$500,000.00 unsecured. This case was investigated by the Chester County Detectives and Willistown Police Department. The assigned prosecutor is Assistant District Attorney Basil Joy. Anybody with any information should contact Willistown Detective Steve Jones at 610-251-0222.

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Approved for release:

Thomas P. Hogan