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**FRAUD**

## **Feds: Bookkeeper Stole \$2.2M Then Fled to Utah as an 'Amish Widower'**

Jody Russell Trapp, 58, was sentenced to 90 months in federal prison on Nov. 8.

Nov. 08, 2022



*By Kaitlyn Alanis, The Charlotte Observer (TNS)*

A bookkeeper accused of [stealing more than \\$2.2 million](#) from his employer in Indiana vanished just two weeks before his court hearing in 2013, according to federal officials. Then he remained out of custody for over eight years—until U.S. Marshals found one of his social media profiles.

Now Jody Russell Trapp, 58, has been sentenced to 90 months in federal prison, according to a Nov. 8 news release from the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of Indiana. He’s also ordered to pay \$2,528,716.63 in restitution.

The Indianapolis man was hired in July 2009 to work as a contract accountant for Shelton Machinery in Fishers, according to court records. A few months after he began working for the company in September, authorities said the man began to embezzle money.

Trapp stole company funds “by diverting checks made payable to one of Shelton Machinery’s suppliers into his personal bank account,” according to the news release. “To accomplish his theft and to conceal his actions, Trapp prepared fictitious or duplicate invoices for work that had already been billed and paid, as well as checks to pay the (fictitious) or duplicate invoices.”

By December 2011, he had embezzled \$2,285,236.63, according to court records. Then he used most of the money to invest in the stock market, where authorities said he received taxable income but failed to file income tax returns.

McClatchy News reached out to Shelton Machinery for comment on Nov. 8 and did not immediately hear back.

Trapp was arrested in January 2012, records show. “He was released on conditions,” and in November he filed a petition to plead guilty.

But two weeks before his change of plea and sentencing hearing scheduled in March 2013, authorities said Trapp secretly escaped from his home.

Trapp’s defense attorney did not immediately respond to a request for comment from McClatchy News on Nov. 8.

Years after Trapp disappeared in 2021, authorities said deputy U.S. Marshals found a social media profile linked to the “fugitive bookkeeper.” They were then able to find many photos of Trapp on Facebook and Instagram.

Law enforcement used this information to find Trapp living in Utah. Officials arrested him again in October 2021.

An investigation revealed Trapp was living as an “Amish widower” by the name of Abram Hochstetler, according to court records. His wife in Indiana had actually divorced him in 2014.

While in Utah, authorities said he “met a wealthy Mormon divorcee at a church dance and married her in 2017.”

Trapp pleaded guilty to wire fraud and tax evasion in July 2022, records show.

“Mr. Trapp has finally been held accountable for stealing millions of dollars from a company that trusted him and fleeing in an attempt to avoid the consequences,” U.S. Attorney Zachary A. Myers said in the release. “The punishment imposed today demonstrates that those who try to obstruct and evade justice will ultimately be held accountable.”

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