

Media Statement



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TO: ALL MEDIA

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RE: FUGITIVE FRAUDSTER FINALLY GOES TO JAIL

A 36 year-old woman from Port Elizabeth, Rhonda Zeelie, who was on the run for a year after she didn't pitch for sentencing, was sentenced to nine years collective imprisonment by the Port Elizabeth Commercial Crimes Court.

This is after she was found guilty for fraud and theft of about R470 000. She was sentenced to five years for theft and to four years for fraud.

Magistrate Lionel Lindoor ordered for the sentences to run concurrently.

In September 2019, she was found guilty and her bail of R2 000 was extended. However, she failed to arrive for sentencing on 18 October 2019 and a warrant for her arrest was issued.

She was re-arrested by the Hawks in September 2020 and has remained in custody since.

Zeelie was employed at Chris Bury Appliances CC as a sales clerk and administration manager. She was also responsible for issuing invoices to clients and depositing money received from them into the bank account of the household appliance repair company.

Between 27 July 2016 and 09 April 2018, Zeelie stole R479 942 from Chris Bury by transferring funds from the company's business bank account into her two bank accounts.

She also started a company while she was employed at Chris Bury and named it Coast & Country Appliances. She ran this business from Chris Bury's office. Zeelie issued several

invoices to a company called Technifix for services rendered. The invoices fraudulently bore a VAT number which rightfully belonged to Chris Bury.

Magistrate Lindoor said that the crimes committed by Zeelie were very serious. "You had ample opportunity to stop your behaviour, instead you were on a highway to the point of no return until the brakes were applied by the complainant."

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