

PRESS RELEASE



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TO: ALL MEDIA

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RE: FRAUDSTER SENTENCED TO NINE YEARS IN JAIL

Bridgette Wait, (36), was sentenced yesterday by the Port Elizabeth Specialised Commercial Crimes Court to nine-years imprisonment for 223 counts of fraud.

From August 2014 to August 2017, while employed in an administrative position at TAG Yachts SA (Pty) Ltd in St Francis Bay, Wait stole from the company just over R3 million. One of her administrative duties was to upload TAG Yachts' creditors banking details on the company system for payment. Some of the banking details she uploaded on the company system belonged to her. Consequently, between August 2014 and August 2017 TAG Yachts made 220 payments into her personal bank accounts which equated to just over R3 million. As the result of the crime, the company was placed under business rescue on 23 August 2017.

Furthermore, during Wait's tenure in 2018 as the director's personal assistant at Bull Clothing (Pty) Ltd in Jeffreys Bay, she defrauded the company close to R300 000. Part of her duties was to upload the beneficiary banking details of the company on the FNB online facility of Bull Clothing. On 28 May 2018, she substituted three banking details of the beneficiaries with her own bank account details. This action resulted in R294 468.83 being deposited into her account.

Wait was arrested by the Serious Commercial Crime branch of the Hawks during November 2019. She pleaded guilty to all counts of fraud during February 2020.

Senior state prosecutor, Advocate Lise Keech, during the sentence proceedings submitted that the accused was in a position of trust and that the crime of fraud was serious and prevalent in the Eastern Cape. She added that the accused spent all the money she stole on luxuries, "she stole out of greed, mere fact that the accused pleaded guilty is not necessarily a sign of remorse, society is tired of people stealing and

defrauding their employers especially during this time in SA where we have a 30% unemployment rate", she added.

The Specialised Commercial Crimes Court sentenced her to nine-years imprisonment for the counts of fraud she committed while employed at TAG Yachts and three-years for the crimes she committed while employed at Bull Clothing. The sentences will run concurrently, meaning that she will serve nine years direct imprisonment.

The National Prosecuting Authority welcomes the sentence.

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