

Media Statement



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TO: ALL MEDIA

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RE: STATE VOWS TO PURSUE WHITE COLLAR CRIMINALS AS PARALEGAL IS SENTENCED TO DIRECT IMPRISONMENT

Today, 24 June 2014, 59 year old Marie Rodney was sentenced to twenty six years after she was convicted on fifty five counts of fraud, theft and forgery. Rodney was appointed as a paralegal and conveyancing secretary at Patel and Totos Attorneys. The attorneys specialise in liquidation and conveyancing transactions. She was in charge of opening new client files, attend to all aspects of conveyancing from the time that a deed of sale for immovable property was handed to her, prepare all documentation necessary for the transfer of such properties, make contact with all relevant institutions regarding documents to be sent to the firm, including the title deeds and bond cancellations. She was also responsible for following up and correspond with clients regarding any enquiries and the progress of transfers, arrange for beetle and/or electrical certificates to be obtained in certain instances and/or obtain rates and levy clearances from the municipality, transfer duty figures and body corporate clearances.

Rodney had the authority to receive funds which were to be paid over to the office administrator who would issue receipts for all funds received. Funds would then either be paid into the trust or business bank account of the attorneys firm. She would also make out requisitions for cheques to be issued by the administrator when monies were supposed to be paid out and these were presented to the administrator for authorisation. The

administrator would then issue a cheque on the requisitions presented to her by the accused.

These cheques would then be presented to Patel and Totos Attorneys for signature and payment would be effected on the falsified requisitions that were presented to the administrator.

Instead of following the correct process of receiving funds and depositing them into the company's bank account, the accused deposited the money into her bank account, that of her partner and other people's bank accounts to which she had access. She altered banking details on the invoices of various service providers in order to avoid detection of funds. She also provided her employer with forged medical certificates for the periods she was away from work.

She was sentenced to three years direct imprisonment for theft, twelve years for fraud of which five years was suspended for five years, eight years for money laundering wholly suspended and three years for forgery. The court ordered that the three year sentence imposed for theft and forgery run concurrently with the three years handed to her for forgery. This means the accused will spend seven years in jail.

The National Prosecuting Authority welcomes the direct imprisonment sentence that was handed to Rodney. White collar crime is a serious crime in South Africa and needs to be dealt with. We wish to inform the public that the State will vigorously prosecute criminals participating in white collar crime wherever we find them. At the end there will be no place to hide. If you do the crime, you will do the time.

Kind Regards,

Issued by:

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