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Police make arrest in suspected embezzlement case



Barbara and Robert Huskey are accused of embezzling about \$450,000 from USA Sales & Automation, Barbara's former employer. Mable McReynolds/The News Examiner

By Brandon Puttbrese
The News Examiner

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A Goodlettsville couple accused of stealing about \$450,000 from a Gallatin manufacturer turned themselves in to police Tuesday.

Barbara Huskey, 39, was indicted on 67 felony counts for her alleged involvement in a check-forging scam that bilked \$441,665 out of USA Sales & Automation — her former employer.

She was also indicted on five misdemeanors for the reported check forging.

Her husband, Robert Huskey, 43, was indicted on 11 felony counts for reportedly depositing forged checks into the couple's personal bank accounts and theft.

The strongest charge against the Huskeys carries a maximum sentence of 8-12 years for each person, said Thomas Dean, the assistant district attorney prosecuting the case.

Both Barbara and Robert are scheduled to answer to the accusations in Criminal Court in Gallatin on March 23 at 8:30 a.m.

Gallatin police officials said they wrapped up the largest embezzlement investigation they've worked in years last month when they filled their impound with pricey cars, motorcycles and a youth football bus they allege the Huskeys bought with the stolen money.

The Huskeys were living a lavish lifestyle that could not be supported by their annual income, said police Sgt. Ricky Troup, who arrested them Tuesday.

Police say officials from USA Sales & Automation, a Gallatin-based manufacturer of equipment for the food industry, realized something was wrong early January when a check bounced from an account that showed a balance in excess of \$400,000.

Police were able to track the money to Barbara Huskey, the secretary in charge of finances with the company, he said.

Barbara is suspected of having written dozens of checks to herself ranging from \$200 to \$9,000 from a company account over three years, said Troup, the lead investigator on the case.

"The checks got higher and higher the farther she got into it," Troup said. "We were able to track every check amount that the company was missing to a deposit slip in the woman's name.

"She wasn't real good at covering up her tracks," he added.

Henry Biggs, part owner of USA Sales & Automation, was not available for comment.

Prosecutors say they hope the court will award the business ownership of the items seized by law enforcement.

If the Huskeys are convicted, the prosecution would encourage the business to seek restitution in civil court, Dean said.

District Attorney Ray Whitley says his office prosecutes "quite a few" white-collar crimes — such as embezzlement — but the cases are not easy to put together.

What police seized

- '03 Cadillac Escalade SUV
 - Chevrolet Avalanche truck
 - Four racing motorcycles
 - Small bus dubbed "The Pain Train"
 - Jewelry
 - Flat screen TVs
 - Stereo equipment
 - Furniture
 - A go-cart
 - Pontoon boat
 - Two Jet Skis
 - \$30,000 in bank accounts
 - \$9,000 cash
- Source: GPD

“White collar crimes take more time to investigate than your typical crime where there might be a substantial amount of physical evidence,” he said. “You don’t have too many smoking guns with white collar crime, you’ve got to follow the paper trail.”

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