



CENTRAL OREGON'S NEWS LEADER

Sawyer Arraigned on State Fraud Charges

Judge Sets Plea Entry for Sept. 6

News sources

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BEND, Ore. -

Former Bend real estate broker Tami Sawyer was arraigned Thursday on state charges of criminal mistreatment and aggravated theft, four days after her arrest at Portland International Airport.

Sawyer was taken into custody by Port of Portland police after arriving on a flight back from Mexico, where she was allowed to go and check on rental property.

She appeared before Deschutes County Circuit Judge Wells Ashby, who continued her bond at \$50,000 but set no travel restrictions, prosecutors said.

Ashby said she can travel outside of Oregon but has to sign and submit a waiver of extradition, should that be needed.

Sawyer faces charges of first-degree criminal mistreatment and aggravated theft., accused of selling Thomas Middleton's home and pocketing the proceeds.

The judge set her next court appearance for Sept. 6 at 8:30 a.m., when she is scheduled to enter a plea.

Sawyer and husband Kevin are scheduled for trial in December on federal fraud and money-laundering charges.

Former Bend real estate broker Tami Sawyer was arrested Sunday night at Portland International Airport on a Deschutes County warrant issued late last week after her indictment on felony charges of criminal mistreatment and aggravated theft.

Sawyer, 48, was booked into the Multnomah County Jail around 9 p.m. Sunday, about a half-hour after her arrest, reportedly having just flown back to Oregon after a judge agreed to let her go check on rental property that she and husband Kevin own in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico.

Deschutes County Circuit Judge Alta Brady signed an arrest warrant with \$50,000 bail last Thursday, two days after she was indicted on a first-degree criminal mistreatment charge that alleges she took custody of Thomas Middleton, a dependent or elderly person, for the purpose of fraud.

The first-degree aggravated theft charge alleges that in October 2008, Sawyer stole more than \$50,000 from the Thomas Middleton Revocable Trust.

State and court documents show Middleton, who suffered from Lou Gehrig's disease, moved into Sawyer's home in July 2008, months after naming her trustee of his estate, The Bulletin reported Saturday. Middleton deeded his home to the trust and directed her to make it a rental until the real estate market improved.

Instead, Sawyer signed documents that month to list the property for sale, two days after Middleton died by physician-assisted suicide. The property sold in October of that year for more than \$200,000, the documents show, and it was deposited into an account for one of Sawyer's businesses, Starboard LLC, and \$90,000 of that was transferred to two other Sawyer companies, Genesis Futures and Tami Sawyer PC.

Sawyer and her husband, a former Bend police captain, face trial scheduled for December in Eugene on federal charges of money laundering, wire fraud and conspiracy to commit wire fraud. They are accused of using investor money to pay for personal property, causing investors to lose \$4.4 million.

A federal judge twice gave permission for her to travel to Mexico, once in May and again last month.