

-
- They were like family.
 - We never suspected any of them.
 - We put our complete trust in them.
 - Why look at the paperwork when you're making a profit?
 - We had cameras everywhere--they wouldn't dare steal from us!
-

Star News

Posted: 3/23/05

***** theft ring foiled

by Jake Muonio Staff writer

Four women have been arrested on felony theft charges after allegedly stealing more than \$87,000 from ***** in Elk River during the past year.

The women, all former employees of the gas station and convenience store, would not ring in items or cancel them out and pocket the money, Elk River Police Chief Jeff Beahen said. One woman allegedly admitted to stealing about \$400 a night.

"It's very disheartening," said ***** owner *****, "We trusted these employees and they've become friends. When you've trusted someone and the evidence shows that there was something going on with the tills right under our noses ... It's a little humiliating."

Fortunately for *****, someone became suspicious of the women and alerted the store's ownership. A tip prompted the business to hire a private investigator [Corporate Combat®], who in a matter of days had compiled a paper trail behind the thefts - a clerk statistic report that wasn't often reviewed.

"This wasn't that hard of a thing to catch, it's just that we trusted them," ***** said. "(It's just that) some of our most prized employees were doing things that were not morally right."

"They figured out a way to manipulate the till. We had some new programs and new tills and they took advantage of it," ***** said.

And it's not that the thefts had been undetected, but there were a number of factors that allowed it to seem less obvious.

"There's been things we've noticed," said *****, the store's manager. "We've been able to tell margins haven't been as good on products."

The thefts allegedly occurred over the past year to year and a half, ***** said.

"For the last seven-eight years we've had very, very little employee problems," ***** said. "That's probably made us a little lackadaisical about it."

According to *****, it appears that one of the employees discovered the method of theft, and taught the other three.

The suspects, whose time of employment at ***** ranged from five months to about five years, admitted to stealing money between \$800 and about \$35,000 each, Beahen said.

The suspects arrested include two 21-year-old Big Lake women, a 20-year-old Brooklyn Park woman and a 20-year-old Ramsey woman.

"I've had customers that come into the store call me when they saw something not going right. That's common," *****.

The incident remains under investigation, but all four suspects face felony theft charges.

The handwritten confessions of the suspects described in the above news release appear below. The interrogations were performed by a Corporate Combat® trained Certified Fraud Examiner.

Date 3/15/05 Store Name [REDACTED]
Time 1:35 a.m. p.m. Store Address [REDACTED] MN 55303

I, [REDACTED], make the following free and voluntary statement to BILL URBAN who has identified himself to me as an employee of Loes Prevention Specialists, Inc. No threats, promises, or mistreatment of any kind has been offered to have me make or sign this statement. I also understand that this statement, or a copy of this statement, could be furnished to any third party at any time by Loes Prevention Specialists, Inc. or [REDACTED]

I am 21 years of age, with a birthday of [REDACTED] /04. My address is: [REDACTED]

I have been employed by [REDACTED] for a period of TOTAL 2 1/2 year/months as a CASHIER (job title).
My social security number is [REDACTED]

In the last 7 months I have taken \$6850 in cash by item correcting out stuff, or not ring things in. By keeping track in my memory, I was able to remember how much to take. Put the money in my pocket to pay my bills. Prior ~~to~~ ^{of} before I was working here before moving I only took a total of 500-1300. Because I didn't have my child and bills. The most ever taken in a day was \$140 by item correcting. This was yesterday. I think I have \$800 of it left in my purse.

[REDACTED] 1:48

1:48. I HAVE ALSO NOT paid FOR SOME GROCERYS, ABOUT \$300 total. such as oil, pop, EVERY day items. When I took the money I used it to pay for a babysitter, Rent, Utilities, INSURENS, baby stuff, etc. I know that [REDACTED] HAS BEEN STEALING money by item CORRECTING. I know FOR A FACT the last 7 months its been going on. I know that more than once she has taken \$300 OR MORE a night, same with [REDACTED]. Also [REDACTED] has taken money by item CORRECTING but no where near as much. I know that what I did was wrong, EVERY day I worried about it. I knew I was being RISKY & could get in trouble for what I have done. I was told I would get a copy of my statement. [REDACTED] 2:15

Witness: Wm [REDACTED] 2:15 pm

[REDACTED] 2:35 pm



This is the \$80 I stole on 3/14 that I am returning

3/15
2:45 pm

Witness: Wm [REDACTED] 2:45 pm

Date 3/15/05
Time 4:30 a.m. p.m. ()

Store Name [REDACTED]
Store Address [REDACTED] 55330

I, [REDACTED], make the following free and voluntary statement to Bill Urban who has identified himself to me as an employee of Loss Prevention Specialists, Inc. No threats, promises, or mistreatment of any kind has been offered to have me make or sign this statement. I also understand that this statement, or a copy of this statement, could be furnished to any third party at any time by Loss Prevention Specialists, Inc. or [REDACTED]

I am 20 years of age, with a birthday of [REDACTED] - 84. My address is: [REDACTED]
I have been employed by [REDACTED] for a period of 17 years/months as a Cashier (job title).
My social security number is [REDACTED]

In the last 8 months I took \$25,000.00 from [REDACTED] to \$32,000.00 All in Cash. I took it by [REDACTED] Hem Correcting off Hems and I would keep track of it either in my head or writing it on a piece of paper. I took the money because in June of 04 my boyfriend and I moved in an apartment & 4 wks later we were both let go of our jobs and had an income loss of over \$3,000.00 per month. I put the money in my pocket when I was walking back to count my drawer. No cameras in hallway by office.

[REDACTED] 4:40 p.m.
1. Witnessed by: [REDACTED] CFE Date 3-15-05 Time 4:40 p.m.

4:40pm

Prior to the financial problem I was taking small amounts ~~amount~~ of money by couponing off gas & car washes which averaged out about \$200-\$400 per month. a total of \$1,000.00. I also probably gave away about \$1,800.00 worth of free things. Such as grocery items, beverages & car washes. The most I ever took in 1 day was \$300.00. yesterday (3-14-05) I took \$100.00 and used it to pay bills. A friend, [REDACTED] who is an ex-employee of [REDACTED] told me how to just coupon off gas to make a few extra dollars. The rest I just figured it out on my own. The only 2 people I know who do this as well is [REDACTED] & [REDACTED], Her correcting like I am. I am ashamed of what I have done and I know it is wrong. I realize I could get in trouble for this. The total I am responsible for is \$28,400.00. I was told I will get a copy of my statement.

5:00pm
Witness: [REDACTED]

Date 3-15-05
Time 6:45 a.m. a.m.

Store Name [REDACTED]
Store Address [REDACTED] 56320

I, [REDACTED], make the following free and voluntary statement to Bill Urban who has identified himself to me as an employee of Loss Prevention Specialists, Inc. No threats, promises, or mistreatment of any kind has been offered to have me make or sign this statement. I also understand that this statement, or a copy of this statement, could be furnished to any third party at any time by Loss Prevention Specialists, Inc. or [REDACTED]

I am 21 years of age, with a birthday of [REDACTED] 183. My address is: [REDACTED] 56320. I have been employed by [REDACTED] for a period of 5 years months as a Cashier (job title). My social security number is [REDACTED]

The past year I had taken \$35,100. I stolen the money off from correcting the merchandise off before the sale ended. There was one false week where I had taken 1000, but that was rare. Before Josh came to work at BX, I had taken about 1000 a week eq. of 12000. Once Josh started working, we got scared & back off a week, taking about 1000 a week = to 21,600. I still have 400 I can return to the store. The most I have ever taken for myself is 300 a day. There are some of the bills I paid off using the money, car payment 300 a month, insurance 200 a month, cell phone 100 a month, gas 200 a month, money 100 a month, credit is total 1000, entertainment about 400 a month, clothes about 100, about 4000 went to my brother for his use, co player for my car 1000, 2000 knowing I was going to be gone for a month + half of work, 2000 in Christmas gifts, this what I can remember right now. Give away or taken about 9,000 in grocery items & car washes over my entire 5 years I have worked at BX. This includes pop, candy, etc. This about 35-40 hours a week for this 5 years. [REDACTED] 5:00pm

1. Witnessed by: Wm [Signature]
2. Witnessed by: [REDACTED]
Signature

CFE
Title

Date 3-15-05
Time 7:00 pm
Date 3-15-05
Time 7:00 pm

[redacted] showed me how to take money. [redacted] & showed her how to do this. [redacted] are also taking money by item correcting. [redacted] has not done this a lot, and when she does, she doesn't take as much as everyone else. [redacted] takes the most because she is the only one that pays the bills. I feel what I have done is wrong and I know if I got caught I would get into trouble. I realized I have caused a loss of

944,700

[redacted] statement

7:05

Witness: Wm. J. [redacted] 7:05 pm

Date 3/15/05
Time 8 a.m./p.m.

Store Name [REDACTED]
Store Address [REDACTED]

I, [REDACTED], make the following free and voluntary statement to Bill Urban who has identified himself to me as an employee of Loss Prevention Specialists, Inc. No threats, promises, or mistreatment of any kind has been offered to have me make or sign this statement. I also understand that this statement, or a copy of this statement, could be furnished to any third party at any time by Loss Prevention Specialists, Inc. or [REDACTED]

I am 20 years of age, with a birthday of [REDACTED]-84. My address is: [REDACTED]
I have been employed by [REDACTED] for a period of 5 years/months as a cashier (job title).
My social security number is [REDACTED]

I took about \$500 cash from the drawer. I also took about \$300 worth of items for my lunch and dinner and did not pay for. I also gave away about \$100 worth of free stuff to my friends. [REDACTED] showed me how to take money for the drawer and also helped me make money because I did not really know how. She showed how to use the item correct bottom to get the money. [REDACTED] 8:06 pm

1. Witnessed by: William [REDACTED] CFE Date 3-15-05
Time 8:06 pm

8:06 am

██████ told me about this trick that they did to get extra money before I applied for the job. ██████ told ██████ and ██████ to slow down and not take as much money. ██████ told them to only take \$100 a day. I was too scared to do it by myself and ██████ said it would not be a good idea because if someone found out I could get in a lot of trouble and my daughter could get taken away. The \$500 I took I spent on my daughter. I've seen ██████, ██████ and ██████ stole money because I've seen them use the item correct before. I feel what I did was wrong, and I know that I could get in trouble for this. I will get a copy of my statement. 8:15 am ██████
Witness: Winkham Prison