



THE UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT *of* JUSTICE

United States Attorney's Office  
District of Oregon

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 6, 2025

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Contact: Public Affairs Officer

Phone: (503) 727-1000

[USAOR.PublicAffairs@usdoj.gov](mailto:USAOR.PublicAffairs@usdoj.gov)

## **Portland Couple Sentenced to Federal Prison for Stealing \$34 Million from Former Client**

PORTLAND, Ore.—A husband and wife from Portland, who together owned and operated a local chauffeur and limousine business, were sentenced to federal prison Wednesday for stealing \$34 million dollars from two former clients.

Sergey Lebedenko, 54, and Galina Lebedenko, 49, were both sentenced to 57 months in federal prison and three years' supervised release. The sum of restitution they must pay to the victim will be determined at a later date.

According to court documents, the Lebedenkos owned and operated a Portland area chauffeur and limousine businesses that eventually became Astra Car Service, LLC. Sergey did the driving, and Galina handled the company's books and finances.

The Lebedenkos met their victim in 2007 when Sergey was hired to drive the individual to the airport. The individual soon became a regular customer of the Lebedenkos. By 2018, Sergey was driving the individual almost daily in and around Portland, and Galina was performing other personal tasks for the victim and the victim's partner including paying their bills, sorting their mail, and providing pet care. This expansive personal services arrangement between the Lebedenkos and their victim continued from approximately 2018 until 2023.

Despite the volume and frequency of paid services the Lebedenkos provided, they never had a written business agreement or contract. In 2013, Galina produced an invoice showing hourly rates of \$90 for driving and \$60 for other services. In about 2016, after nearly a decade of working together, the victim gave the Lebedenkos his American Express credit card information so they could directly charge the card for their services.

Other than the single invoice issued in 2013, the Lebedenkos never provided their victim with logs of their hours or information about how much they were charging for their services. For much of their work, only the Lebedenkos knew the amount of time they spent providing services. On rare occasions, Sergey was questioned by the victim about certain minimal charges and Sergey would repeatedly play up their longstanding, trusting relationship.

The Lebedenkos stole approximately \$34 million over seven years. On a single day in 2023, the Lebedenkos charged their victim's credit card 17 times for a total of \$17,900 for picking up and delivering a prescription and meals.

The Lebedenkos used their ill-gotten gains to fund an extraordinarily extravagant lifestyle for themselves and others, purchasing 14 homes and properties, 7 vehicles, an ownership interest in a private jet, and countless luxury items including shoes, watches, wallets, jewelry, and gold bars. As part of their sentences, the court entered a Final Order of Forfeiture against assets the Lebedenkos purchased with proceeds of their fraud, including 14 real properties and 19 financial accounts, which are pending forfeiture and sale. The government intends to seek remission of forfeited assets to the victim.

On January 22, 2024, the Lebedenkos were together charged by federal criminal complaint with committing wire fraud and money laundering. Later, on February 21, 2024, a federal grand jury in Portland returned an indictment charging the couple with conspiracy to commit wire fraud and money laundering, and 34 individual counts of wire fraud.

On October 25, 2024, the Lebedenkos both pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud, conspiracy to commit money laundering, and wire fraud.

This case was investigated by the FBI and IRS Criminal Investigation. It was prosecuted by Meredith D.M. Bateman and Andrew T. Ho, Assistant U.S. Attorneys for the District of Oregon. Forfeiture proceedings are being handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Katie C. de Villiers, also of the District of Oregon.

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