

Local woman charged in \$1.7M fraud was either a co-conspirator or 'blind' Crown prosecutor tells court

Airport Nissan's former business manager was either a "definitive" co-conspirator in a \$1.7 million car fraud driven by a salesman or "blatantly wilfully blind" to what was going on at the Brampton car dealership, Crown prosecutor Cam Watson told a court last Thursday.

Lynn Fuller, 51, of Georgetown was the business manager at the Brampton dealership when salesman Shahid (Sean) Sheikh, 51, is alleged to have masterminded an elaborate fraud involving 40 vehicles, some of which were shipped out of the country.

Fuller pleaded not guilty to numerous criminal charges in the judge-alone Brampton trial before Justice Casey Hill that has been underway since April 2010.

Watson said if the court finds she wasn't a key player in the conspiracy then she was wilfully blind to the legitimacy of Sheikh's deals and therefore still guilty of participating in the conspiracy.

Defence lawyer John Collins maintained Fuller was set-up as a pawn in her largely clerical position. She had no authority to approve deals or to price them. She also vehemently denied any involvement in any illegal scam when she testified.

Collins insisted much of the Crown's case was based on testimony of a man, who was given immunity despite being very involved in the fraud. Akbar Warris testified Fuller was fully aware of what was going on. But he admitted producing false insurance slips, phony T4s and other fraudulent documents for Sheikh. He also arranged for people to be paid a fee so their names could be used to purchase vehicles they

never actually bought.

"He's a bare-faced liar and a cowardly opportunist," Collins said. He was an accomplice in the conspiracy and gave "tainted evidence" in order to save himself from deportation, Collins said.

Collins reminded the court there were no fraudulent deals in the seven months that Fuller worked at the dealership before Sheikh was hired or in the months after he was fired. She was also never accused of any wrongdoings by dealership management in the larceny, and she continues to work in the industry.

Sheikh's matter was severed from this case and will be tried separately at a later date along with his son.

Another man, Ranjit Bislam, 48, is accused of purchasing several vehicles in deals arranged by Sheikh and Fuller using fake company information and other fraudulent documentation. On his credit application, he claimed to be the owner of a financially sound Brampton trucking firm when in fact he was an unemployed truck driver whose submitted T4 statements vastly overstated his real income.

Bislam, who pleaded not guilty, is alleged to have fraudulently purchased five vehicles worth more than \$200,000 from Sheikh and Fuller, cars that were 100 per cent financed through different lending institutions. He later reported three of them stolen.

In the fraud, imaginary clients as well as those with bad credit, fake insurance slips, phony T4s, and doctored employment and income records were used to sell the vehicles. Only 11 were ever recovered.

"Nothing that Fuller did as a seasoned professional business man-

ager indicated she operated with her eyes open," Watson said. "...she simply remained in ignorance...The scheme was perfected by Fuller."

The Scotia Bank, Royal Bank, TD Bank, HSBC Bank, Nissan Canada Financial Corp. and the Wells Fargo Financial Institution suffered financial losses. Of the 41 loans, all but one went into default.

It was the Crown's case that Sheikh committed most of the fraudulent transactions with Fuller between Oct. 1, 2004, and Aug. 31, 2006.

Watson contends Fuller signed off on Sheikh's phony sales contracts and secured funding from various lenders. She completed the paperwork, some legitimate and some fraudulent, and submitted documentation to auto and finance companies. There was never any suggestion the dealership was involved.

At trial, court heard that Fuller was paid a small base salary and 20 per cent of commission on gross profit of extras sold such as extended warranties and rust proofing. She also received commission on fees paid by banks to the dealership for each car financed.

Watson said Fuller never reviewed Sheikh's sales contracts and insisted she never met 99 per cent of his clients. Despite being a seasoned car industry veteran in a position of trust she insisted that she simply "pushed paper." But she earned substantial commissions for fully-loaded deals that literally landed in her lap, Watson said.

"It was easy, free money after Sheikh came to the dealership and that's why she kept quiet," Watson said.

—Torstar News Service

Reunion to be held June 10-12

Lorne Scots to celebrate 145th anniversary

This summer, the Lorne Scots Regiment will be celebrating the 145th anniversary of the regiment.

This regiment has a proud past that involves honours in both the First World War and the Second World War, and continues to support the war effort in Afghanistan today.

The Lorne Scots recently announced a reunion marking their 145th year of service, including a weekend of events that have been organized for all the regiment's

family and friends, past and present, from June 10-12.

The events will start on June 10 at 3 p.m. in the Georgetown Armoury with a pub night featuring entertainment.

Saturday, June 11 will kick off at 9 a.m. in the Georgetown Armoury with a bus leaving from there at 11 a.m. to the Cheer Gardens at the Georgetown Highland Games.

There will be no parking or individual admittance at Cheer Gardens, so people wishing to attend

must pre-register.

At 6 p.m. there will be a regimental barbecue.

Sunday, June 12 will conclude the weekend's events at the Brampton Armoury with a pancake breakfast at 8 a.m., the annual general meeting at 9 a.m. and a farewell lunch at 11 a.m.

Tickets for the event are \$75 per person for the weekend and \$25 per person per day.

For more information or to obtain a registration form, email info@lornescots.ca.

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.35/100g

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