



U.S. Department of Justice

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Eastern District of Texas

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FORMER UNION PRESIDENT INDICTED FOR EMBEZZLING FUNDS

At least \$80k Stolen from Plumbers & Pipefitters Local Union # 237

TYLER TX – United States Attorney Matthew D. Orwig and Roger Hilburn, Regional Director of the Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) announced today that the former president of Plumbers and Pipefitters Local Union 237 has been indicted for embezzlement in the Eastern District of Texas.

WILLIAM “WILLIE” BROWN, 52 of Atlanta, Texas was charged with multiple counts of embezzlement in the indictment returned by a federal grand jury today.

U.S. Attorney Orwig said, “Labor Unions are vital to the progress and economic success of communities throughout the Eastern District of Texas. We will continue to protect the benefits and investments of these organizations and their individual members.”

Roger Hilburn, Regional Director of the EBSA said, “This indictment should send a strong message to all Union representatives responsible for pension, health and welfare plans that the EBSA and our federal law enforcement partners will vigorously pursue criminal misconduct.”

According to the Indictment, Brown is alleged to have embezzled at least \$80,000 while serving as President of Local Union # 237, located in Texarkana, Texas. The funds were stolen between late 1997 and late 2002 from the Union’s Apprenticeship and Training Fund and the General Fund. Brown had also served as the Union’s Apprenticeship and Training Coordinator. As Coordinator, Brown had financial control and oversight of the training funds checkbook and petty cash fund, among others. The Apprenticeship and Training Fund is a health and welfare plan protected under Title 1 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act. Eight specific instances of theft and embezzlement are alleged in the Indictment.

If convicted, Brown could receive up to five years in federal prison and a fine of up to \$250,000.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Wes Rivers. The investigation is being conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor’s Employee Benefits Security Administration, Office of Inspector General and the Office of Labor Management Services.

It is important to note that an indictment should not be considered as evidence of guilt and that all persons charged with a crime are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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