

PRESS RELEASE

Former Local 98 President Brian Burrows Sentenced to Four Years in Prison for Embezzlement of Union Funds, Filing False Government Reports, and Tax Fraud

Wednesday, June 26, 2024

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of Pennsylvania

PHILADELPHIA – United States Attorney Jacqueline C. Romero announced that Brian Burrows, 64, of Mount Laurel, NJ, was sentenced today by United States District Court Judge Jeffrey L. Schmehl to 48 months' imprisonment, three years of supervised release, forfeiture of \$135,689.11, an \$1,800 special assessment, and restitution to be determined later, for crimes arising from his embezzlement of funds belonging to Local 98 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers ("Local 98").

Burrows had served as the President of Local 98 since 2008. The only person who held a higher office in the union was his codefendant, Business Manager John Dougherty. In January 2019, a federal grand jury indicted Dougherty, Burrows, and other union officers and employees with conspiracy and embezzlement arising from their theft and improper use of approximately \$600,000 in Local 98 funds from April of 2010 through August of 2016. The indictment also charged Dougherty and Burrows with concealing the embezzlement of Local 98's funds by causing false labor management reports, known as LM-2s, to be filed with the U.S. Department of Labor, and with filing false federal income tax returns by failing to report the funds they stole on their tax returns.

In December 2023, a federal jury convicted Dougherty and Burrows of conspiracy to embezzle the funds of Local 98. Burrows was also convicted of 13 counts of embezzlement of funds from Local 98, two counts of causing false statements to be made on the form LM-2 that Local 98 was required to file annually with the Department of Labor for 2015 and 2016, two counts of causing false information to be reflected in

the books and records of Local 98 for those years, and three counts of filing false federal income tax returns. The charges of which Burrows was convicted included the illegal use of approximately \$391,000 in union funds to improve and repair his home, the homes of codefendants Dougherty and Michael Neill, commercial properties owned by him and his codefendants, and the homes of Dougherty's relatives.

Dougherty was convicted of 33 counts of embezzlement of funds from Local 98, 24 counts of wire fraud by participating in a scheme to defraud Local 98 of its money, two counts of causing false statements to be made on the form LM-2 that Local 98 was required to file annually with the Department of Labor for 2015 and 2016, two counts of causing false information to be reflected in the books and records of Local 98 for those years, and three counts of filing false federal income tax returns.

The other officers and employees of Local 98 charged in the indictment pleaded guilty in 2022 to charges related to their embezzlement of Local 98's funds and were sentenced earlier this year. They are Michael Neill, former Director of Local 98's Apprentice Training Fund; Marita Crawford, former Political Director of Local 98; Niko Rodriguez, an employee of the Apprentice Training Fund and Local 98; and Brian Fiocca, an employee of Local 98.

Dougherty is scheduled to be sentenced on July 11.

"The members of a union should be able to trust their leadership," said U.S. Attorney Romero. "They have every right to expect that their officers will act in their best interests and that their dues will be used for their benefit. That wasn't the case at Local 98, where Brian Burrows violated his duty to his members for his own benefit and allowed his codefendants to do the same. Burrows stole from the hardworking electricians whose dues paid his salary, took deliberate steps to conceal it, and is now being held appropriately accountable."

"In serving himself over the members of Local 98, Brian Burrows abused his position as the president of the Union and breached the trust of those whom he was elected to serve. Today's sentence makes it clear that this kind of self-dealing at the expense of others will not be tolerated," said Wayne A. Jacobs, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI's Philadelphia Division. "The FBI and our law enforcement partners remain unwavering in our commitment to upholding the integrity of labor unions for the members who rely on them, and bringing to justice those who exploit them."

"Anyone contemplating cheating on their taxes should know that IRS Criminal Investigation Special Agents work tirelessly, year-round, to investigate tax and financial crimes," said IRS Criminal Investigation Acting Special Agent in Charge Denise

Leuenberger. "The outcome today is due to the dedicated efforts of IRS Criminal Investigation special agents and our law enforcement partners."

"Brian Burrows, the former President of IBEW Local 98, conspired with other former union officials to enrich himself at the expense of the union's dues-paying members by embezzling union funds. We will continue to work with our law enforcement partners and the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Labor-Management Standards and Employee Benefits Security Administration to safeguard union assets," said Syreeta Scott, Special Agent in Charge, Mid-Atlantic Region, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation; Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation; the U.S. Department of Labor Employee Benefits Security Administration; the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Labor Management Standards; the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General; and the Pennsylvania State Police, with assistance from the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Frank Costello, Chief of the Corruption & Civil Rights Unit; Bea Witzleben, Co-Chief of Trials; Jason Grenell, and Anthony Carissimi.

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