

# White collar crime

by BRIAN LOCKHART

It's no secret that white-collar crime is not dealt with very harshly.

You see stories all the time of people embezzling money from their employers or other people, and rarely do they receive a punishment that reflects the damage they have done.

In most cases, by the time the crime is discovered, the money is long gone ? spent on frivolous notions, vacations, or other expensive things that aren't tangible.

Sometimes a person will spend the money on homes or cars that can be recovered and recoup some of the losses, but you can't recover money that was spent on a private jet trip to Las Vegas with a ton of cash dropped at a casino.

In rare cases, a judge will order the person to pay back the stolen money. Good luck with that.

If a person steals \$5 million and blows it all, which is usually the case, where will they get the money to pay it back?

A lot of people and businesses have been hurt by these types of scams. Depending on the business, it can take years before a crime is discovered, as many people develop different systems of stealing money. Some create secret bank accounts and write their own cheques.

Others develop false billing or similar and pretend to pay other people for services when the money is actually going to themselves.

There's all sorts of devious plans people devise to steal money, from simple outright theft to very complicated accounting frauds.

The courts rarely hand out a harsh punishment for this type of crime, unless it's government money you're stealing.

A former Ontario government employee with the Ministry of Education, named Sanjay Madan, will be cooling his heels in a penitentiary after receiving a 10-year sentence for six counts of fraud, breach of trust, and money laundering.

He managed to steal \$47 million from government funds.

His crimes included stealing \$11 million from a pandemic aid fund that was supposed to help parents or guardians with money for educational expenses. On top of that, he had a fraud scheme involving kickbacks on government-owned computers to the tune of \$36.6 million.

He apparently masterminded the scheme with one of his associates, who is also facing a laundry list of charges in a separate trial.

He did this while already making a salary of over \$170,000 at your expense.

His wife, Shalini Mada, and two adult sons also worked for the provincial government. As part of a plea deal, criminal charges were dropped against her, but she still faces civil suit charges.

His family claimed they had no idea what he was up to. However, they couldn't offer an explanation as to why their father and husband could purchase \$28 million in assets in Canada and India including six Toronto condos worth \$3 million.

The family opened more than 400 bank accounts at the Bank of Montreal, then deposited around 10,000 cheques made out to

fictitious applicants with thousands of non-existent children under the support program.

This type of fraud against you and me, the citizens of the province who paid the taxes to fund these programs, raises a lot of concerns.

How could a fraud that started in 2010 go undetected by the government? Where are the checks and balances that are supposed to be in place to prevent this type of thing?

How could the bank not notice something fishy was going on? If you are one hour late on your mortgage payment, the bank knows it, and you will be getting a call, but if a guy and his family open 400 bank accounts with the same bank, no one in bank security found that a tad suspicious?

According to reports, once Madan gets out of the cooler, he will have five years to pay back the full amount or face another six years in prison.

Good luck with that. Most likely, he will disappear and be back in India, never to be heard from again.

This type of fraud is the worst ? he didn't pull a con on his own criminal associates. He stole from people who needed and deserved that money.

Hopefully, his associate, who is an even bigger fish in this scam pond, will get to match the 10-year sentence or receive more to set a precedent that stealing will not be tolerated by the hard-workingcitizens of this province.