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NEWS

# LEADER GETS PRISON IN \$69 MILLION THEFT

By John Gorman  
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Convicted swindler Armand Moore got a 10-year 5-month prison term and a stern lecture on his own stupidity Wednesday for the theft of more than \$69 million from the First National Bank of Chicago.

"You`re not as smart as you think you are," U.S. District Court Judge Harry Leinenweber told Moore.

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"It was such a stupid crime. You got hold of it," the judge declared. "You Merrill Lynch and expect them not



The money had been transferred in weekend. Had the swindlers been in at least some of the money could have been withdrawn, investigators believe.

In calling the scheme "the most massive and almost successful computer crime I`m aware of in the history of the United States," Assistant U.S. Atty. Jeff

Stone asked that Moore be sentenced to the maximum.

"He uses his intelligence to scam, steal and manipulate," said Stone.

"For the good of society, he should be taken off the streets for as long as possible."

Leinenweber told Moore that imposing a prison sentence is normally very difficult, but not in this case.

"Because you deserve it, it really doesn't bother me. It's easy to sentence you to the 125 months," Leinenweber said of the maximum sentence.

Moore and four others-Neal Jackson, Leonard Strickland, Ronald Carson and Otis Wilson-were convicted in June of plotting to steal the money from First National and transfer it to two Austrian banks.

Leinenweber sentenced Strickland to 4 years and 3 months, Carson to 3 years and a month, Wilson to 3 years and Jackson to 2 years and 8 months.

Stone reminded the judge that Moore gave "palpably false testimony" on his own behalf. Stone offered to "recite chapter and verse" for Leinenweber. "You don't have to. I heard the testimon

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Stone's characterization of Moore

The judge said Moore's testimony because most defendants do not te

"That enabled me to view you in gr talents but it's extraordinarily was person," Leinenweber said. "You h you want something for nothing."

During the trial, Stone told the jury that the day after the money was transferred, Moore went shopping for a \$50,000 Jaguar.

But that wasn't all he wanted.

"He was trying to spend the money before he got it," Stone charged.

"He wanted an eight-bedroom, four-bath luxury suite at Lake Point Tower, and he was buying three houses in Detroit."

"If Mr. Moore had a motto," Stone declared, "it would be: 'What's mine is mine and what's yours is mine if I can get my hands on it.'"

But Moore and his coconspirators never got their hands on the money after successfully transferring it out of three First National Bank customer accounts on Friday, May 13, 1988.

The five transferred \$24.3 million from the account of Merrill Lynch & Co., \$19.7 million from the account of Brown-Forman Corp. and \$25 million from the account of United Airlines.

They succeeded in transferring the \$69 million and planned to steal \$236 million in all, Stone reminded Leinenweber.

Moore's attorney, Paul Wagner, agreed that the scheme was "dumb" but said it had the "appearance of sophistic

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cooperation of an insider, Gabriel T. Taylor, who worked in the transfer room.



Taylor and another conspirator, He... and testified against the others. Th...

Wagner told the judge that Moore...

and that there was no violence involved in the crime. In prior remarks, Moore told Leinenweber he appreciated the judge's allowing him out on bond up to the day of his conviction.

Stone's coprosecutor, Scott Mendeloff, cited Moore's previous crimes in asking Leinenweber to send Moore to prison.

"Mr. Moore's life has been a pattern of one encounter with the law after another," Mendeloff said. "He will manipulate others without any sense of conscience."

Mendeloff was alluding to a long arrest record that includes a 1982 conviction in Detroit for masterminding a scheme that bilked 10 charter jet firms out of nearly \$200,000 by setting up a phony bank in Chicago to issue bogus letters of credit.

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