

Jun 25, 2024

Contact Kylie Mason

Phone (850) 245-0150



OFFICE OF THE
ATTORNEY GENERAL
STATE OF FLORIDA

Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

Attorney General Moody's OSP Secures Second 30-Year Prison Sentence in Amore Pools Case



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody's Office of Statewide Prosecution today secured a strong prison sentence against a woman operating a million-dollar pool contracting scheme. The Honorable Judge Dan L. Vaughn sentenced Chrystal Washburn, owner of Amore Pools, to 30 years in prison for defrauding Florida homeowners. Chrystal, alongside husband and co-defendant Brian Washburn, took deposits and payments for pools—often leaving dangerous debris piles and gaping holes in victims' backyards. In total, the duo stole more than \$1.2 million in unaccounted-for cash.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "This couple promised to deliver dream pools, but left holes in Floridians' hearts and backyards, by abandoning pool projects and stealing more than \$1.2 million in cash. Thanks to our Statewide Prosecutors, Chrystal Washburn, the owner of this pool company, will now serve 30 years in prison for operating this scheme."

According to an investigation by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, Chrystal Washburn started Amore Pools after fraudulently obtaining a contractor's license despite having no experience in the pool industry. Washburn lied on the application and forged another contractor's signature on an affidavit claiming to have worked with that contractor for more than five years. During the course of the scheme, Chrystal Washburn acquired local contractor

licenses in various Florida counties by having a Palm Beach County engineer fraudulently vouch for her experience, lie and say that Washburn previously worked for the engineer's company.

Brian Washburn's role in the scheme included acting as the frontman, selling homeowners on the idea of a custom dream pool and did some of the construction work. Chrystal Washburn operated behind the scenes handling contracts and payments. The couple marketed Amore Pools as a small family business, using both attractive digital imaging in sales presentations and emotional invocations of sympathy by describing the family's past tragedies. The Washburns made lofty promises of completing projects within 90 days, or included extra pool features for free to induce homeowners to enter into contracts with Amore and pay large deposits and front-end payments. Often, however, after receiving a deposit, the projects went abandoned, leaving backyards in disarray with dangerous materials and massive holes.

In an attempt to cover up the fraud and make it impossible for customers to receive money back, the couple used a third-party check cashing store to convert the customer checks into cash. The Washburns also committed identity theft by forging customer signatures on permit applications and notices of commencement. Several victims ended up with liens on their properties when Amore failed to pay its vendors for materials.

A jury found Chrystal Washburn guilty of the following:

- One count of false information on application for contractor's license, a third-degree felony;
- One count of unlicensed contractor, state of emergency, a third-degree felony;
- One count of organized scheme to defraud, a first-degree felony;
- Seven counts of fraudulent use of personal identification information, third-degree felonies;
- Two counts of money laundering, first-degree felonies;
- One count of omit/conceal information to avoid workers' compensation premium, a second-degree felony; and
- One count of insurance application fraud, a first-degree felony.

Attorney General Moody's OSP previously secured a 30-year prison sentence for Brian Washburn. To read, click [here](#).

Assistant Statewide Prosecutors Jonathan Bridges, Cynthia Irvin and Sophia Birriel-Sanchez prosecuted this case.

Attorney General Moody's *Scams at a Glance: Sink or Swim* provides resources and tips to avoid pool contractor scams. To view the brochure, click [here](#).

#