

# Department of Justice



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## **FBI Agent Convicted for Falsifying Information When Applying for a Passport**

**EL PASO**, Texas — Following a four-day trial, a federal jury has convicted a woman on felony offenses for submitting false information when applying for a passport in June 2014, announced Erin Nealy Cox, U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Texas.

Rhonda Lynn Chesser Lindstrom, 41, most recently from Washington, D.C., was convicted last week on three counts of false statement in application for passport. Each false statement count carries a statutory penalty of not more than 25 years in federal prison and a \$250,000 fine. Lindstrom is scheduled to be sentenced by U.S. District Judge David Briones on June 7, 2018.

Because Chesser Lindstrom worked as a Special Agent in the El Paso FBI office, and presented cases to the Western District of Texas U.S. Attorney's office, the Western District of Texas Assistant U.S. Attorneys were recused and Northern District of Texas Assistant U.S. Attorney Paulina Jacobo was appointed as a Special Assistant to the Attorney General.

According to evidence presented at trial, on June 10, 2014, Chesser Lindstrom personally appeared at the United States Department of State, El Paso Passport Agency (EPPA), and submitted an Application for a U.S. Passport. As required by the application, Chesser Lindstrom provided as proof of citizenship a State of Louisiana Birth Certificate issued on August 22, 2011. The date of birth on the birth certificate was August 26, 1977. As proof of identity, Chesser Lindstrom provided a State of Maryland Driver's License with a date of birth of August 26, 1977.

A Passport Specialist conducted a thorough and detailed review of Chesser Lindstrom's Passport Application. He noticed that the birth certificate appeared to have been altered. Specifically, the birth certificate showed clear signs of handwritten alterations in three places, the Birth Number, the Birth Date, and the File Date. The birth certificate had erasures and numbers rewritten in the three places. Since it was obvious that the birth certificate was altered, the case was referred to the Fraud Prevention Manager (FPM).

On June 12, 2014, the Passport Application was further reviewed by the Fraud Prevention Office to verify all information submitted by Chesser Lindstrom. The results of the review indicated that Lindstrom's correct date of birth was August 26, 1976; no record was found of a Rhonda Chesser born on August 26, 1977, as indicated on the birth certificate she provided to the EPPA.

The EPPA asked for additional information and Chesser Lindstrom provided additional false documents after enticing her older sister to participate in creating those documents.

The Department of Justice Office of Inspector General was the lead investigation agency, assisted by the U.S. Department of State, Diplomatic Security Service, Criminal Fraud

Investigations, and the United States Department of State, El Paso Passport Agency Program Fraud Office investigated. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Paulina Jacobo and Chris Wolfe prosecuted.

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