



Department of Justice

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FBI Agent Sentenced for Falsifying Information When Applying for a Passport

EL PASO, Texas — Rhonda Lynn Chesser Lindstrom, 41, formerly of El Paso, Texas was sentenced Thursday, June 7, 2018, by Senior U.S. District Judge David Briones to four years' probation and a \$1,000 fine, on each count of the indictment, said terms to run concurrent, and to home confinement for a period of six months, following a four-day trial in March 2018, announced U.S. Attorney Erin Nealy Cox of the Northern District of Texas.

Chesser Lindstrom was found guilty on three counts of false statement in application for a passport. In sentencing, the Court found Chesser Lindstrom had willfully obstructed justice.

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 Attorney 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, and 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, 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 investigated the case, 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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