

PRESS RELEASE

Stevensville timber frame home builder convicted by federal jury of defrauding customers of more than \$2 million

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For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, District of Montana

MISSOULA — A federal jury convicted a Stevensville timber frame home builder on Sept. 20 of wire fraud and money laundering crimes in an alleged scheme in which he defrauded customers of more than \$2 million by obtaining payments to build them homes but instead used the money for personal expenses and to pay other debts, U.S. Attorney Jesse Laslovich said today.

After a five-day trial that began on Sept. 16, the jury found the defendant, Brett Mauri, 61, guilty of four counts of wire fraud and two counts of money laundering. Mauri faces a maximum of 20 years in prison, a \$250,000 fine, and three years of supervised release on the wire fraud counts, and a maximum of 10 years in prison, a \$250,000 fine, or twice the amount of the criminally derived property involved in the transaction, and three years of supervised release on each count of money laundering.

U.S. District Judge Dana L. Christensen presided. The court set sentencing for Jan. 30, 2025. Mauri's release was continued pending further proceedings.

"Mauri stole nearly \$2 million from people who trusted him to build their dream homes. He consistently lied to them and made excuses about the lack of progress on each project, some of whom didn't have anything to show despite paying Mauri thousands and thousands of dollars. They didn't just suffer monetary losses, but mentally and emotionally, too. I hope his forthcoming federal prison sentence gives them comfort knowing he can't scam anyone else again," U.S. Attorney Laslovich said.

In court documents and at trial, the government alleged that Mauri is the owner and operator of Bitterroot Timber Frames (BTF) and Three Mile Creek Post & Beam, LLC. According to Mauri and the company's website, BTF built custom timber frame homes across the United States. Mauri claimed credit for large projects in some of America's most popular ski towns between the 1990s and 2010s. The government alleged that between 2018 and 2022, Mauri defrauded nine individuals who hired him to build their timber frame homes. Many of the

agreements were made by written contract, while some were formed by email or over the phone. Mauri obtained payments from these customers and lied to them about his operations and what he was doing with their money. Mauri ultimately provided little to nothing in return.

The scheme involved Mauri inducing customers to send him funds, which were ultimately deposited into his or his wife's bank accounts. Mauri, and his wife, Carrie McEnroe, primarily used the money for personal living expenses and to pay other debts instead of building the homes as he promised. What work Mauri did perform on victims' projects gave his operation the hallmarks of a Ponzi scheme. He frequently solicited new money from a victim and used the funds, in part, to cover past expenses that were often incurred on earlier projects. The scheme resulted in victims paying Mauri more than \$2 million. In exchange, Mauri provided very little materials or services, and some victims received nothing at all. Victims had hired Mauri to build homes in the Montana communities of Whitehall, Victor, Corvallis and Missoula, and in New York, Utah, and Louisiana. The U.S. Attorney's Office is prosecuting the case. The FBI conducted the investigation.

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