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Disgruntled Worker Accused of Deleting \$2.5 Million of Files

By Grayson Kamm

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Jacksonville, FL - The target may be high-tech, but the emotion involved is as old as humanity. Spite, anger, and revenge. Police say that's what filled a woman's heart after she picked up the classified ads.

When Marie Cooley came across a job that looked like hers in the classifieds, she admits she was certain she was about to be fired.

So police say late Sunday night, she crept into the Mandarin office where she worked at Steven E. Hutchins Architects.

"She decided to go and mess up everything for everybody," said Jacksonville Sheriff's Office spokesman Ken Jefferson.

Jefferson says Cooley accessed the company's server with her own account. And with a handful of mouse clicks and keystrokes, he says she deleted seven years' worth of architectural drawings.

Seven years of work -- gone in seconds.

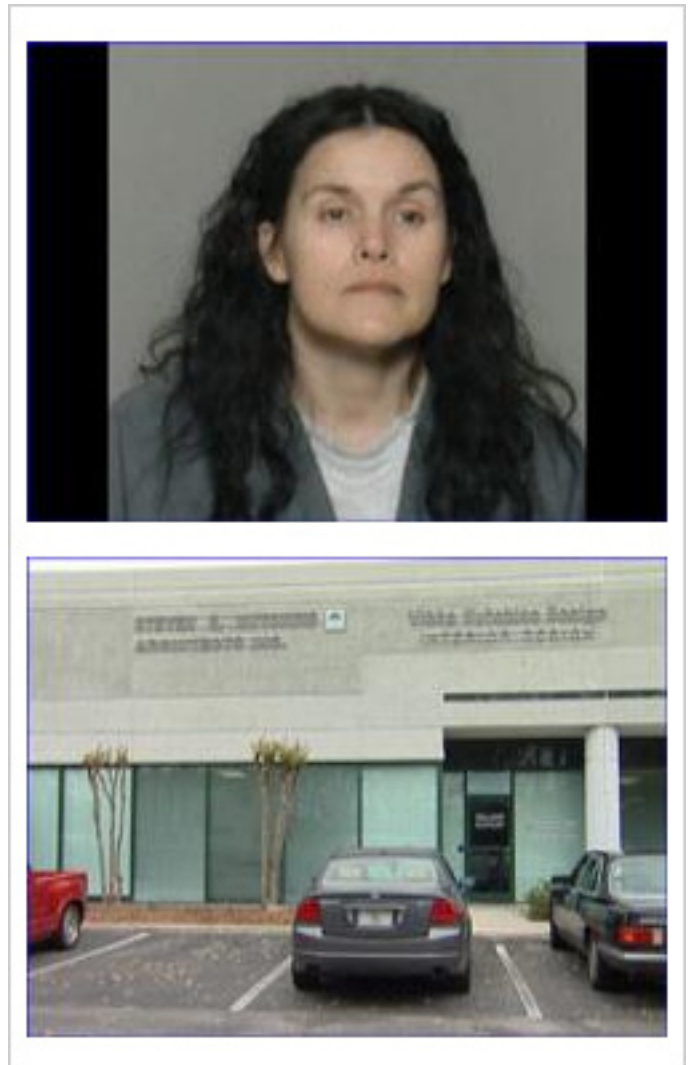
The company put the value of the vaporized files at \$2.5 million.

"She decided to be spiteful and go in and sabotage the records. And she did a very good job of that," Jefferson said.

According to police, Cooley confessed to the crime. It's a second degree felony that could lay the blueprints for a five-year prison sentence.

Folks at the architecture firm didn't want to talk on camera about the disastrous deletion.

The owner did tell First Coast News that he's paid good money to recover those files and he says he's now



managed to get every deleted drawing back from its digital death.

“The lesson to be learned here is that you can’t depend on having just one set of records or files and having your employees have access to them. You’ve got to have some kind of backup,” Jefferson said.

And here’s the most sobering part: the owner of the architecture firm says Marie Cooley was not going to be fired. He says the job listing was for his wife’s business -- not his.

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