

Case Study

Upton & Co

Married accountant stole £500,000 in tax money to fund luxury life and lavish lover with expensive gifts

By [CHRIS BROOKE](#)

UPDATED: 10:28, 10 February 2012

Victoria Fraenzel had no idea that Upton was a married father-of-one

To his clients, he was a happily married accountant who they trusted to look after their affairs.

But in reality, Darren Upton was stealing hundreds of thousands of pounds from them so he could live a luxury lifestyle and keep a glamorous mistress.

The 40-year-old had begun a relationship with blonde model Victoria Fraenzel, 36, after using an internet dating website and pretending to be single.

He bought her sexy lingerie, set her up in an £800 a month flat, gave her spending money and provided her with designer clothes and Mulberry handbags.

Upton also paid for Bentley and Maserati cars with personalised number plates for himself and his wife, splashed out on a £10,000 box at Leeds United football club and even spent £3,000 on a model railway.

Miss Fraenzel had no idea her lover was married with an 18-month-old child until she rang his office and was put in touch with his wife Tina, Leeds Crown Court was told.

In total the accountant left 33 clients and the taxman with losses of more than half a million pounds.

Yesterday Upton was jailed for six years after admitting 15 fraud offences between January 2010 and June last year. He asked for 23 similar offences to be taken into consideration.

Upton, who had previously been investigated and forced to pay compensation for an unauthorised investment scheme, had continued to commit offences when he was on bail.

Passing sentence, Judge Sally Cahill, QC, said the crimes were committed for 'pure selfish greed'.

She told him: 'You were thoroughly dishonest and motivated by greed. This was a gross breach of trust, it was planned from the offset and fraudulent from the offset.'

'I consider this to be professional offending at a high level.'

Prosecuting, Nick Worsley said the defendant was director of Upton and Co Accountants in Wakefield, West Yorkshire, and his wife worked as the company secretary.

The firm had around 800 clients, mainly small information technology companies.

Instead of paying his clients' Corporation Tax to Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, Upton used their cash and diverted it into his own account for personal use.

The total value of his fraud was £532,000.

His clients even ended up having to pay penalties for unpaid tax when his crimes were exposed.

Upton, of Woodlesford, Leeds, made excuses when questions arose and eventually staff at his firm reported him to the police.

Darren Upton met make-up artist and part time model Victoria Fraenzel on a dating website

Mr Worsley said many of the clients he deceived felt totally betrayed as they regarded him as a friend, while one even had Upton as a guest at his wedding.

Other victims said their businesses had been left close to collapse and they had suffered ill health. One said: 'I am absolutely devastated I have been left in this position and it has had a massive effect on my business.'

He said he could no longer take on staff because of Upton's betrayal. The main beneficiary of Upton's greed and spending was Miss Fraenzel, a make-up artist and part-time model.

After meeting her in October 2010, Upton paid the deposit and rent on a flat in Salford for her to use, the court heard.

He began paying for a Mercedes sports car for her and gave her a living allowance. He bought her clothes from Harvey Nichols, Mulberry handbags and Ann Summers lingerie.

The court heard they enjoyed nights out at Hilton hotels and she considered herself to be his girlfriend until she discovered he was married.

James Littlehayles, defending, claimed Upton made a legitimate annual profit of £250,000, but began offending because he was forced to repay £840,000 to the Financial Services Authority in monthly instalments of £10,000 in connection with the earlier unauthorised investment scheme, which had not led to criminal charges.



Luxury: Upton used £14,500 to refinance a Bentley Continental, pictured, which was in breach of a court order issued when he was arrested (library picture)

'He was not prepared to cut back on his lifestyle. Rather than give up his box at Leeds United and the vehicles which he had previously legitimately funded, he then starts to misappropriate clients' funds,' he said.

After the case, Detective Sergeant Gary Ferris said he was delighted his victims had seen justice served.

'He [Upton] was incredibly deceitful,' he said. 'Not only was he stealing monies from his clients, he was also blackening their names with the HMRC and continued to carry out his crimes even when he was on bail.'

Read more: <http://www.thisismoney.co.uk/money/news/article-2099244/Married-accountant-stole-500-000-tax-money-live-luxury-life-lavish-lover-gifts.html#ixzz1qLQuTB7q>

Case Study

Upton & Co

Continued

‘Deceitful’ Leeds accountant jailed UPDATED



Darren Upton.

By Tony Gardner

Published on **Thursday 9 February 2012 15:50**

An “incredibly deceitful” accountant who took hundreds of thousands of pounds from clients to fund his luxury lifestyle has been jailed for six years, court officials confirmed today.

Darren Upton, 40, arranged for cash that clients paid him to settle tax bills to be paid instead into his bank account.

He spent thousands on a range of luxuries, including lavish spending on his mistress, Leeds Crown Court heard.

His spending included a box at Leeds United’s Elland Road ground and a model railway.

He and his wife Tina drove a Bentley and a Maserati with personalised number plates, the court was told.

A judge also heard how Upton, who is a married father of one, met a part-time model on the internet and set her up in a flat in Salford as well as buying her a car, underwear and handbags.

His affair was only discovered when his mistress contacted his office and got hold of Mrs Upton.

The court heard the total loss to clients and Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs (HMRC) was more than £500,000.

Today, court officials confirmed Upton, of Holmsley Lane, Woodlesford, near Leeds, was jailed for a total of six years by Judge Sally Cahill QC after admitting 15 counts of fraud and another of contempt of court relating to breaching a restraining order. He also asked for a number of other offences to be taken into consideration.

The court heard how Upton was the director of Wakefield-based Upton and Co. accountants which had around 800 clients which were mainly small businesses.

Police said the clients he deceived felt cheated, especially as many were personal friends.

Upton even went to the wedding of one of the victims. His clients believed they were giving Upton cash to pay corporation tax bills but they were paying the money into Upton's business account.

Detective Sergeant Gary Ferris, of West Yorkshire Police, said: "Upton abused his position as a trusted accountant to steal hundreds of thousands of pounds, not only from his clients but from his own personal friends.

"He was incredibly deceitful, tricking them into depositing cash into his business' bank account under the pretence that they were paying their corporation tax. Not only was he stealing monies from his clients, he was also blackening their names with the HMRC and continued to carry out his crimes even when he was on bail.

"The sentence he has received is a reflection of the seriousness of his crimes and I am pleased that justice has been served for the victims of his deception."