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NEWS RELEASE

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From: Jenna Wallace, District Attorney

Details: Former Lincoln City restaurant manager found guilty of Aggravated Theft and Initiating a False Police Report in connection with staging a fake robbery.

On January 24, 2025, after a three-day jury trial, Denali Cox, was found guilty by a Lincoln County jury of Aggravated Theft in the First Degree and Initiating a False Report.

On the morning of July 31, 2023, Denali Cox, then manager of Pelican Brewery in Siletz Bay, called 911 to report that she had just been robbed. Ms. Cox alleged that she was walking to her car with a bank deposit bag with more than \$17,000 inside a paper sack when an unknown male jumped out of the bushes, grabbed the paper sack, and ran away. Cox told law enforcement that she chased the male, but lost him in the woods.

Lincoln City Police Department (LCPD) immediately responded to Pelican Brewery and established a perimeter to search for the male suspect. More than a dozen members of law enforcement were called in from LCPD, Oregon State Police and the Lincoln County Sheriff's Office. LCPD's K9 Nix was deployed by Officer Cody Snidow in an attempt to locate the male suspect. However, no male suspect was located.

Detective Sergeant Randy Weaver with the Lincoln City Police Department took over the investigation as lead detective. Weaver, with more than 35 years of law enforcement experience, continued to investigate the allegations made by Cox in her initial 911 call and subsequent interviews. Further investigation revealed that Cox intentionally stole over \$17,000 in cash from the Pelican Brewery and deliberately staged a robbery in order to conceal her theft.

In October 2023, Cox was arrested in Hawaii and extradited back to Lincoln County, Oregon, to face charges related to her conduct on July 31, 2023. This case proceeded to trial on January 22 – 24, 2025, and the State was represented by Deputy District Attorney, Michael Thornicroft. At trial, the State called 11 witnesses and submitted over 56 exhibits to the jury. The 12-person jury deliberated for approximately 3 hours before finding Cox guilty beyond a reasonable doubt of Aggravated Theft in the First Degree, Class B Felony, and Initiating a False Report, Class A Misdemeanor.

“This case involved a lot of incredible police work. Law enforcement left no stone unturned. In the end, it was just presenting the jury with each piece of the puzzle” DDA Thornicroft stated. “Separately, the pieces made no sense, but like a puzzle, as they came together, the picture was clear. The jury saw it for what it was.”

After the guilty verdicts, Cox was taken into custody and sentenced by the Honorable Judge Amanda Benjamin on January 27, 2025. At sentencing, Judge Benjamin sentenced Cox to 24 months supervised probation and ordered to pay \$17,434.77 in restitution to the Pelican Brewery on the Aggravated Theft in the First Degree charge. Cox also received 36 months of bench probation and 17 days jail with credit for time served on Initiating a False Report charge. Cox may also be responsible for paying restitution to the responding law enforcement agencies for costs incurred in responding to and investigating the false report.

The Lincoln County District Attorney's Office would like to specifically thank the Lincoln City Police Department, Lincoln County Sheriff's Office and the Oregon State police for their immediate response and thorough investigation into this incident in the pursuit of truth and justice.