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your money

Corzine fined \$5M over MF Global case

Collapsed brokerage allegedly used nearly \$1B in customer funds illegally

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WASHINGTON - Jon Corzine, the former New Jersey governor who led the collapsed brokerage MF Global, has been ordered to pay a \$5 million penalty for his role in the firm's alleged illegal use of almost \$1 billion in customer funds.

A federal court in Manhattan on Thursday granted the order against Corzine to the U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission, which brought civil charges against him in 2013. Following the stunning collapse of the big Wall Street firm in late 2011, the CFTC alleged that MF Global misused customer funds in a vain attempt to remain solvent. Corzine failed to closely supervise the handling of customer money by the firm's employees, according to the order.

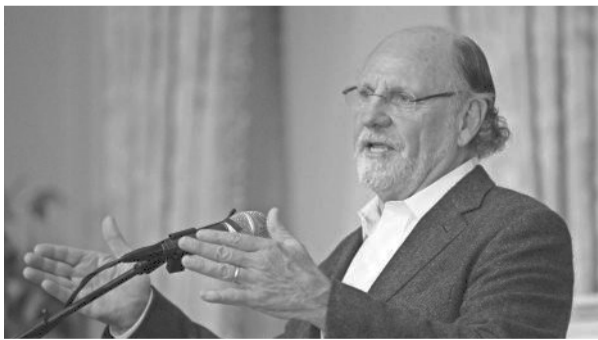
Corzine, who was the CEO of Wall Street powerhouse Goldman Sachs before entering politics in 2000, was banned by the court order from serving as an official or employee of any commodities trading firm. He also was banned from trading most commodities and other investments regulated by the CFTC, with some limited exceptions.

A related order issued by U.S. District Judge Victor Marrero imposed a \$500,000 penalty on Edith O'Brien, an assistant treasurer at the firm who had the authority to approve transfers of customer money. She was said to have aided and abetted MF Global's alleged violations. O'Brien was banned from working at a commodities trading firm or trading commodities for 18 months.

The court action brought the resolution of a five-year legal drama for Corzine, enabling him to avoid a trial that had been set to begin in October. He had denied wrongdoing from the outset and insisted he didn't order anyone at MF Global to divert customer funds.

Corzine said he was pleased that the matter was resolved. "I have accepted responsibility for (MF Global's) failure, and I deeply regret the impact it had on customers, employees, shareholders and others," he said in a statement. "I remain gratified that several years ago all customer money was recovered and returned to MF Global customers."

New York-based MF Global imploded after a disastrous \$6.3 billion bet on European countries' debt. The firm filed for bankruptcy protection on Oct. 31, 2011. The \$41 billion bankruptcy was the eighth-largest in U.S. history at the time and one of Wall Street's biggest. About \$1.2 billion in customer money was discovered to be missing. The regulators had said that MF Global moved the money out of client accounts within days as the firm's cash dried up.



FILE PHOTO

Former Gov. Jon Corzine, who led the collapsed brokerage MF Global, has been ordered to pay a \$5 million penalty.

SENIOR SOLUTIONS FOR THE JERSEY SHORE



DAVID GARD/CORRESPONDENT

Beverly Zaccherio is the owner of Senior Solutions for the Jersey Shore LLC, a 4-year-old company that provides both light home services to seniors as well as affordable consulting to help seniors and their families navigate the different support resources available to them in the area. "Many seniors want to stay in their homes and we strive to enable that," she says.

BUSINESS MEETS A CRITICAL NEED

Company helps families with elderly members

SUSAN BLOOM/CORRESPONDENT

After being downsized from her longtime marketing position at a leading crystal manufacturer in 2008, Beverly Zaccherio decided to reinvent herself professionally with a job in the health care industry.

"I became a certified home health aide because it offered the flexible hours I needed to raise my then-2-year-old son," explained the Connecticut native and 36-year Point Pleasant resident. "I enjoyed interacting with people and ended up working at a number of state and other at-home agencies as well as nursing homes and assisted living facilities."

Though originally intended as a temporary career move, Zaccherio soon found herself drawn to the field and what she saw as an unmet industry need. "So many families I worked with told me that if they'd known other options were available, they would have pursued them rather than, for example, selling their mom or dad's home so quickly and moving them to an assisted living facility or nursing home," she said. "People are often just lost and struggling when it comes to making life decisions for their elderly loved ones."

Industry-wide dilemma

According to Zaccherio, the drivers behind this reality are industry-wide and often unintentional.

For starters, "seniors can't always fully comprehend their own situation and things can fall through the cracks," she said. "Their kids – the so-called 'sandwich generation' – don't always live locally or have the time to help, and while hospitals offer social workers, the whole health care industry often doesn't have the time to provide in-depth help to each family because they're overwhelmed with so many cases."

As a result, Zaccherio believed that more needed to be done for families. "I felt that there should be a company that could help bring it all together for families and coordinate care for seniors at an affordable price," she said, officially launching her Point Pleasant-based response – Senior Solutions for the Jersey Shore LLC – in 2013.

Zaccherio prides herself on consulting with and educating families who are often 'emotionally overwhelmed' by their elderly loved one's situation.

"I've taught a course for over three years at Ocean County College's Adult Education program called 'Lifestyle Changes: Coping & Caring for Seniors,' through which I discuss the local programs and financial resources available for seniors, the differences between options like assisted living, nursing homes and in-home care, and the questions families need to ask," said Zaccherio, who also presents her seminar at local churches, libraries and community centers.

"Families often don't discuss issues like preventative management before a crisis and only first make decisions for their loved one when they're in panic mode, such as when their mother is being released from the hospital the next day, so I'll listen and talk to them based on my opinion and experience," she said.

Zaccherio also shares information from the database of local support services she's built over the past six years. "Each county in New Jersey runs a senior program through which they offer seniors free or low-cost resources, such as the Ocean Ride bus service in Ocean County, which offers \$2 rides for seniors, as

SENIOR SOLUTIONS FOR THE JERSEY SHORE

Location: Point Pleasant

Phone: 732-456-0974

Opened: 2013

Founder/owner: Beverly Zaccherio

Website: www.jerseyseiorsos.com

well as a range of services offered by various organizations and houses of worship," she said. "People are sometimes afraid to make phone calls out of pride, embarrassment or because they think they won't qualify for the programs, but the fact is that a lot of senior centers are losing funding and closing because they're not being utilized. People aren't aware of all of the wonderful resources available in their local area."

Invaluable support

Along with her personal consulting work (priced at \$25 to \$30 per hour), Senior Solutions also employs eight trained specialists who provide such in-home health aide services as light housekeeping, cooking, errand-running and home organizing.

"Many seniors want to stay in their homes and we strive to enable that," she said, "looking out for red flags on their behalf, reminding them to take their medication, providing companionship and more."

It's a service that Mary Jo Brownback has found essential. Struggling to care for her 77-year-old husband Walter, who was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease and dementia, the Mantoloking resident and retired nurse "learned of Beverly through our Realtor and we've found her incredibly compassionate and caring," said Brownback, who's welcomed Zaccherio's team to her home three times a week for three to four hours at a time since April.

"When my husband fell, Beverly sent someone right over to help me pick him up and also introduced us to local resources we may never have known about, such as a mobile foot doctor and hairstylist. She's always there personally to help and her team is very accommodating and trustworthy," she added. "They've provided invaluable support to our household and have given me and my children tremendous peace of mind."

Though Zaccherio said the business can be cyclical and she sometimes has to act as a referee between sparring siblings – "I try to encourage them to put away their differences and focus on what's best for their parent," she said – she hopes to ease the burden on families through her personal problem-solving services and has often been called an 'angel' by her clients.

"My mom was a nurse for 40 years and set up things for herself and my father so that us kids wouldn't have to worry," Zaccherio said of the gift she hopes to give others.

"Our mission is to empower families and individuals with educational resources so that they understand their full range of choices," she said. "Through this process, we've met so many amazing people and have become part of so many wonderful families. If we can help families avoid pitfalls and enhance quality of life for seniors, then we'll have made an indelible difference in our Shore community."

Macy's, Sears, Kmart all announce closings of stores

ASSOCIATED PRESS

After a disappointing holiday shopping season, the nation's largest department stores and some of the shoppers who still depend on them are set for an unhappy new year. Macy's, Kohl's and other department stores are hurting as more people shop online, visit lower-priced stores or spend more of their money on smartphones and other gadgets. The future of department stores seems bleak as they close locations — and thus give shoppers less options at the mall and more reason to just stay home and shop online.

"I don't think there are any happy endings," said Mark Cohen, a retail studies professor at New York's Columbia Business School and a former Sears Canada CEO.

Macy's said it will close 63 of its 730 stores this year and expects to cut more than 10,000 jobs as it seeks to

reduce costs, including stores in Moorestown, Voorhees and Wayne. Sales at established stores fell 2.1 percent in November and December, the New York-based retailer said late Wednesday. Kohl's also reported a 2.1 percent sales drop at established stores in the last two months of 2016.

Sears, which has lost money for years amid falling revenue, said it plans to shut 150 locations, including 109 of its Kmart stores. None of the stores closing were in Monmouth or Ocean counties, although Kmart is closing stores in Clementon, East Brunswick, Pleasantville, and Rio Grande.

Among those closing is Kmart's first store, the Detroit Free Press reported, which opened in 1962 in Garden City, Michigan. And Sears is also set to part with another part of its history: It reached a deal to sell its famous Craftsman tools brand to Stanley Black & Decker Inc., but will continue to sell its products in its stores.

Sears first took control of the Craftsman name 90 years ago.

Macy's, which has tried to woo shoppers with more exclusive products and designated areas for smart-watches and an Apple shop at its flagship New York store, is also vacating the downtown Minneapolis building that was for decades the headquarters and flagship store of the Dayton Co. department store chain.

Tammy Curling lamented the announcement that a Macy's in Lynchburg, Virginia, would be among those closing. She worked at that location when it was a previous department store, Thalhimers.

"That's where I met my husband," she told the News & Advance of Lynchburg.

For department stores, though, the future looks no brighter. Macy's and Kohl's both said they now expect full-year earnings to be lower than they previously forecast.