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Posted: 12:05 a.m. Tuesday, July 9, 2013

Former bank employee accused of stealing \$675,000 indicted

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Jan Underwood

Dorothy Cline, 85, recounts how she and her ailing husband were befriended by bank officer Elizabeth Niehaus, while Cline's attorney Craig Matthews listens.

By **Lou Grieco**

Staff Writer

A former Union Savings Bank manager, accused of pilfering at least \$675,000 from an elderly couple who were her clients, now faces federal charges of embezzlement, money laundering and filing a false tax return.

All of the charges against Diane Elizabeth Niehaus are felonies. The complaint against her was filed in March but sealed until late June, according to federal court records.

Niehaus, 39, is currently free, though an arrest warrant was executed March 11, according to records.

Niehaus resigned from the bank Sept. 22, 2011, three days after the Dayton Daily News published a story about her relationship with Jesse and Dorothy Cline, a Beavercreek couple whom Niehaus befriended after she met them at the bank's Centerville branch. After Jesse's death in March 2011, Dorothy sued Niehaus and her husband Paul, stating they had taken money from the Clines.

To settle the lawsuit, the Niehauses agreed in May 2012 to transfer \$366,000 in a cash box to Cline's attorney, and to transfer ownership of their home on Riva Court in Beavercreek to the bank, according to an affidavit of FBI Special Agent

Michael R. Bush. Cline's lawsuit claimed the Niehauses used the Clines' money to purchase that home.

Under the settlement, the bank paid \$834,066 to the estate of Dorothy Cline, who has Alzheimer's disease and lives in an assisted care facility, according to Bush's affidavit, which was filed with the complaint.

Attorney Craig Matthews, who represented Cline in her lawsuit, said he could not discuss the details of the settlement, but added that "we're pleased to have brought this matter to the attention of the federal agencies through our lawsuit."

Tom Anderson, the assistant federal public defender assigned to represent Niehaus, could not be

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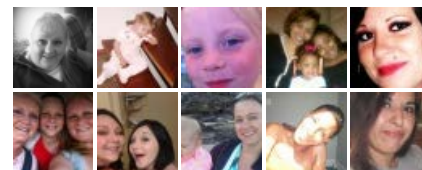
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reached for comment Monday.

Bush's affidavit states that, between October 2007 and October 2008, Niehaus made more than \$12,000 in unauthorized withdrawals from the accounts of people identified only by the initials JF and RF. Niehaus told RF that another employee had stolen the money and explained how it was done, but she "had actually explained her own embezzlement scheme to RF," Bush wrote.

Niehaus used some of the Clione's money to replace the missing money, Bush wrote.

The Clines' daughters told Bush that, during late 2007, Niehaus befriended the Clines, assisting them with all of their banking activities. Jesse was medicated for several conditions, including congestive heart failure and diabetes, while Dorothy had dementia and could no longer balance her checkbook or cook meals. On Aug. 25, 2010, Niehaus became power of attorney for both of the Clines, Bush wrote.

Bank employee Venus Jackson told Bush that the Clines were not present during each of the time that she notarized documents for them and that she did not read the documents. Miami Valley Hospital records show that Jesse Cline was in the intensive care unit the day the power of attorney documents were notarized, Bush wrote.

An affidavit filed in 2012 by IRS Agent Laurel Vant stated that Niehaus and her husband both worked at Fifth Third Bank in Pickerington, Ohio, when she "caused her husband to be rewarded for loans that he had not referred" and both were fired Jan. 6, 2004 for "self-dealing and embezzlement."

Two years later, Niehaus' father called Fifth Third and asked about a \$32,000 loan in his name for a 2003 BMW 850. He told bank officials he had never applied for the loan nor owned the car. Diane Niehaus was making the payments, according to Vant's affidavit.

Niehaus started using her middle name, Elizabeth, when she started working at Union Savings Bank in 2006, according to Vant's affidavit.

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Posted by mlbm at 1:13 a.m. Jul. 9, 2013


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Posted by flyer19 at 3:09 a.m. Jul. 9, 2013

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Crimes against the elderly are a felony. Grand theft is an additional charge!



Posted by sydbag at 9:21 a.m. Jul. 9, 2013

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Put her in a room with all of the people's relatives for 30 minutes and anything goes.

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