

Woman gets 4 years for stealing Motorola secrets

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Hanjuan Jin, enters the federal courthouse Wednesday, Aug. 29, 2012, in Chicago, before being sentenced to four years in prison for stealing trade secrets from Motorola. Jin, who worked as a software engineer for Motorola Inc. for nine years, was stopped during a random security search at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport on Feb. 28, 2007, before she could board a flight to China. Prosecutors say she was carrying \$31,000 and hundreds of confidential Motorola documents, many stored on a laptop, four external hard drives, thumb drives and other devices.(AP Photo/M. Spencer Green)

(AP)—A federal judge sentenced a Chinese-born American Wednesday to four years in prison for stealing millions of dollars in trade secrets from Motorola, describing her as a soft-spoken, unassuming woman who carried out a "very purposeful raid" on the company in the dead of night.

In a barely audible voice and heavily accented English, 41-year-old Hanjuan Jin told the judge she was "so sorry for what happened" and pleaded for a second chance. Her lawyers had argued that she took the files merely to refresh her knowledge after a long absence from work and was not spying for China. They appealed for leniency and asked that Jin receive probation, in part because of her poor health.

But U.S. District Judge Ruben Castillo said it was important to send a message that would deter others with access to trade secrets from siphoning off vital information.

"In today's world, the most valuable thing that anyone has is technology. ... The most important thing this country can do is protect its trade secrets," Castillo said.

Jin, who worked as a software engineer for Motorola Inc. for nine years, was stopped during a random security search at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport on Feb. 28, 2007, before she could board a flight to China. Prosecutors say she was carrying \$31,000 and more than 1,000 confidential Motorola documents, many stored on a laptop, four external hard drives, thumb drives and other devices.

Castillo found Jin guilty in February of stealing trade secrets but acquitted her of more serious charges of economic espionage. The judge said the evidence fell short of proving beyond a reasonable doubt that she stole the information to ultimately benefit the Chinese military, as prosecutors alleged.

At Wednesday's sentencing, however, Castillo noted that Jin had also possessed confidential Chinese military documents and was identified as an employee of China-based Sun Kaisens, a telecommunications firm that U.S. government attorneys say develops products for China's military.

A person would "have to have their head in the sand" not to see that her theft could have benefited—albeit perhaps indirectly—China's military and government, Castillo said. He concluded in his sentencing remarks that Jin, who became a naturalized U.S. citizen days before the theft, must have at least been willing to betray her adopted country.

He also referred to the theft as "a very purposeful raid."

"It is a raid in no uncertain terms. It is a raid to steal technology. ... You conducted this raid in the dead of night when you knew that there was a lesser chance you'd get caught," he said.

Prosecutors alleged that among the secrets she carried were descriptions of a walkie-talkie type feature on Motorola cellphones that prosecutors argued would have benefited the Chinese military.

"What the defendant took was Motorola's playbook," Assistant U.S. Attorney Steven Dollear said in court.

Afterward, Dollear told reporters he was happy with the sentence, believing it would serve as a deterrent and encourage companies to pursue justice without fear that their trade secrets would be revealed in court.

Jin's lawyers refused to comment after the sentencing.

They have maintained that Jin was not an agent for China and sought to portray her as a woman with a remarkable against-the-odds success story who simply made one serious mistake for which she was overwhelmingly remorseful.

Born into an impoverished family in rural China, Jin managed to excel academically, they said, and earned a master's degree in physics from the

University of Notre Dame.

"There's no question that Ms. Jin did something wrong, something illegal," her attorney, John Murphy, told the judge. But before and after the theft, she led a law-abiding and even inspirational life, he said.

He noted she also recently overcame a "near-death experience" with meningitis and tuberculosis, and battled cancer. The judge took her health into account in deciding on a sentence.

Jin must report to prison on Oct. 25. She also has to pay a \$20,000 fine and will be subject to three years of supervision upon her release.

Motorola Inc. has since become Motorola Solutions Inc., in suburban Schaumburg.

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