Former Qualcomm executive sent to prison for insider trading

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A former Qualcomm Inc. executive was sentenced Friday to 18 months in prison and fined $500,000 for an insider trading scheme to profit off the wireless technology company's confidential information and then covering up his crimes.

Jing Wang, 52, the former global business operations president, pleaded guilty in July to charges of insider trading, money laundering and obstruction of justice in the case that ended in convictions for several Qualcomm employees.

"Jing Wang was a powerful insider at one of the world's top corporations, but he threw it all away to make a few hundred thousand dollars," said U.S. Attorney Laura Duffy. "While Wang has lost his power, his position and his freedom, the real losers here are investors who play by the rules, and our nation's financial system, which is diminished with every one of these schemes."

Wang made three trades based on insider information, starting when he bought $277,000 in Qualcomm stock before the company announced a dividend increase and stock repurchase.

In December 2010, he purchased stock in Atheros Communications Inc. after Qualcomm's board of directors approved a non-public offer to buy the developer of semiconductors for wireless communication, but before news of the pending $3.1 billion acquisition was reported.

Weeks later, Wang sold the Atheros stock for approximately $481,000 and purchased Qualcomm stock a day before the company announced record earnings, prosecutors said.

Wang and his stockbroker tried to blame the trades on Wang's brother, who lives in China. The brother is wanted on an international warrant for his role in the scheme.

The stockbroker and three other former Qualcomm executives have either pleaded guilty or settled civil allegations.

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