

Walmart to pay \$282 million over foreign corruption charges

Associated Press Walmart agreed Thursday, June 20, to pay \$282 million to settle federal allegations of overseas corruption, including funneling more than \$500,000 to an intermediary in Brazil who was known as a “sorceress” for her uncanny ability to make construction permit problems disappear.

U.S. authorities went after Walmart under the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, which prohibits American companies operating abroad from using bribery and other illegal methods.

The nation’s biggest store chain settled both civil charges brought by the Securities and Exchange Commission and a criminal case built by federal prosecutors in Virginia. It said the two settlements close the books on federal investigations that stretch back to 2012 and have collectively cost the company more than \$900 million.

“We’re pleased to resolve this matter,” said Walmart President and CEO Doug McMillon in a statement. “Walmart is committed to doing business the right way, and that means acting ethically everywhere we operate. We’ve enhanced

our policies, procedures and systems and invested tremendous resources globally into ethics and compliance, and now have a strong Global Anti-Corruption Compliance Program.”

In the criminal case, Walmart agreed to pay \$138 million to avoid prosecution, while its Brazilian subsidiary, WMT Brasilia, pleaded guilty to violating the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act.

As for the civil case, the SEC announced a \$144 million settlement against Walmart for “failing to operate a sufficient anti-corruption compliance program” in Brazil, China, India and Mexico.

“Walmart valued international growth and cost-cutting over compliance,” said Charles Cain, chief of the SEC unit overseeing FCPA violations. “The company could have avoided many of these problems, but instead Walmart repeatedly failed to take red flags seriously and delayed the

implementation of appropriate internal accounting controls.”

The criminal case focused on corruption that occurred in Brazil in 2009 and 2010 and involved what authorities said were misdeeds by the subsidiary that led the parent company to submit inaccurate financial records.

The money that went to the intermediary was recorded as payments to a construction company, even though there were numerous red flags indicating the intermediary was actually a government official, authorities said. Walmart Brazil was barred at the time from hiring civil servants.

Court papers do not identify the intermediary but say she became known inside Walmart Brazil as a “sorceress” or “genie” for her “ability to acquire permits quickly by ‘sort(ing) things out like magic.’”

A representative of Walmart Brazil had no

comment.

Walmart’s foreign practices have been under investigation since 2012.

The New York Times won a Pulitzer Prize for reporting that year that exposed millions of dollars in bribes made by Walmart executives to facilitate growth in Mexico.

According to the SEC, companies including Halliburton, Anheuser-Busch InBev, JPMorgan and Panasonic reached settlements under the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act ranging from \$6 million to \$264 million in recent years.

Last year a Brazilian energy company agreed to pay nearly \$1.8 billion.

Bentonville, Arkansas-based Walmart recently reported quarterly earnings of \$3.84 billion. It announced last year that it decided to sell 80% of its stake in Walmart Brazil to Advent International at a loss of \$4.5 billion. At the time, the subsidiary had 438 stores in Brazil.

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ACROSS

1 ___ on (urges)
5 Antelope
8 Colorado Indian
11 Macaw
14 Loose women in London
16 Set of rooms
18 Mayan Indian
19 Actor Glass
20 Observant
21 Muslim’s faith
22 Item in Gypsy Rose Lee’s closet
23 ___ hat
24 Storm center
28 Paid athlete
29 Desert wanderer’s relief
30 Civil War soldier, for short
33 Archway wedge
39 Puts in a postal box
42 “You ___ Live Twice”
44 Hitch in secret
45 Tightly stretched
46 Confidentially
52 Congressman: abbr.
54 ___ brio
55 Merciless
56 ___-Magnon
57 Lacquered, in a way
62 Church communities
65 Tokyo, formerly
66 Marriage
69 Atlas abbr.
70 ___-relief
71 Easy listening
78 Doonesbury’s first name
80 Goosebump-inducing
81 ___ to middling
82 Celebrities
84 Gradual, in music
87 “Futurama” delivery boy
88 Augustine of ___
90 Not quite right
92 What a brat might be
101 Advanced deg.
102 Bling
103 “You’re ___ of Me” (Kim

Carnes)
104 “King Lear” character
106 Tattered scrap
107 Frau’s emphatic negation
108 Column style
109 Boldness
110 Sooner, to a poet
111 Army chief: abbr.
112 Soak
113 Germ

DOWN

1 Greek alphabet’s seventh
2 Storm
3 Color of a Savile Row suit?
4 Throat infection
5 Go on about
6 Blue or White river
7 2002 Olympics site
8 Shadow

9 Lao-tzu’s thinking
10 Make feeble
11 ___ Kodesh (Holy Ark)
12 Spade, for Bogart
13 Common connector
15 Baby shower symbol
16 ___-in
17 Australian bird
25 Adversary
26 Tobiko, e.g.
27 SEATO’s sphere
30 Hold up
31 Compass pt.
32 Sandwich counter order
34 Wistful thinking
35 Foxlike
36 “Never ___ Late”
37 “Bloom ___ County” penguin
38 Tidy
40 First name in monstrous butlers
41 Metric unit

43 Workout spot: abbr.
47 Very long time
48 World-weariness
49 Alphabetic trio
50 Genetic material: abbr.
51 Epiphany offering
53 Like whole numbers: abbr.
57 One of George Bush’s sons
58 His rap was cut from “Hamilton”
59 Assume as a fact
60 Culmination
61 Completed
63 Inhabitant of: suffix
64 Feudal laborer
67 Cooking fat
68 Poverty
71 Deserving
72 Raw mineral
73 Kind of evergreen
74 Steeped drink
75 Yokel

76 Broadcast
77 Dehumidified
79 Mel Brooks muse Madeline
83 Coin
84 Emulate
Seuss’s Mr. Brown
85 Tennessee Ernie Ford unit
86 More than occasionally
89 Primp’s pal
91 Bona ___ (credentials)
92 Burn a little
93 Margin
94 Short-lived craze
95 Milit. addresses
96 Edible rootstock
97 Math subj.
98 Space-saving abbr.
99 Monster of legend
100 Church area
101 Post’s opposite
105 Like Bette’s dress in “Jezebel”

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