

NATI NEWSWIRE

SENIOR SAFETY ISSUES

Caretaker sent to prison for taking \$100,000

by Sheila Gardner, sgardner@recordcourier.com

A 46-year-old Dayton woman who continued to plunder the account of a mentally disabled man after his death was sentenced Tuesday to four years in Nevada State Prison and ordered to repay \$100,000.

District Judge Dave Gamble told Sandra Vasquez she must serve 12 months before she is eligible for parole. She pleaded guilty to forgery and is the subject of a civil judgment of \$190,566.43.

She admitted taking funds from a trust fund for William Reifer, 63, who died Aug. 12, 2004, of a brain tumor. Reifer had been diagnosed at age 12 as a paranoid schizophrenic. His father set up a \$2 million trust fund in 1993 to provide financial security for his son.

District Attorney Mark Jackson said Vasquez victimized Reifer following brain surgery and continued taking money following his death even after District Judge Michael Gibbons froze his accounts and issued a temporary restraining order.

“Mr. Reifer was dying. He had brain surgery, it affected his speech,” Jackson said. “He was having seizures and heavily medicated from the time she met Mr. Reifer.”

Jackson discounted her claims that she was trying to help Reifer. “She claims she did it out of the kindness of her heart, but she did it for the goodness of her wallet.”

Jackson said no one knew what happened to the money. “Where is the money? We don’t know. It went into the bank account and out of the bank account,” he said. “We don’t know if she buried it or if it is being held by someone else.”

Vasquez told Gamble the money was gone. She said she didn’t start out to steal from Reifer. “I did take the money, but not intentionally,” she said. “When I came into Mr. Reifer’s life, I had opened my own business. I was working for Mr. Reifer and I just had all these bills.”

Former SunTrust exec stole thousands

By [BETH WARREN](#)

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution—GA

A SunTrust Bank executive pleaded guilty this week in Atlanta to stealing thousands of dollars from an elderly mentally challenged client.

Assistant Vice President Valerie Spaduzzi spent the victim's money on lavish trips and on lingerie, clothes and electronics, according to a release by Fulton County prosecutors.

Now Spaduzzi, 32, is destined for a much more modest lifestyle during her year in prison for 43 counts of felony theft by taking by fiduciary. And she has to pay back about \$150,000, according to the order by Superior Court Judge Bensonetta Lane.

After Spaduzzi is released from prison, she must spend 14 years on probation. She can no longer work at a job that involves handling money, she must pay a \$1,000 fine and perform 200 hours of community service.

Attorneys Plan To Appeal Evidence Suppression Ruling

INDIANAPOLIS -- An Indianapolis man accused of killing his mother and grandparents and burying their bodies in a basement likely will not begin trial this year.

The trial for Kenneth Lee Allen was set to begin Oct. 1, but his lawyers plan to appeal a judge's ruling denying their request to suppress evidence.

No new trial date has been set. Allen's attorneys argued that an initial police search of the Indianapolis home in February 2005 was illegal because the officer did not have a warrant.

Prosecutors said police entered the home because they thought Allen's grandparents were in danger.

Investigators said they believe the killings were part of a scheme to steal \$200,000 in savings from the elderly couple.

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FORMER DHHS WORKER JAILED FOR STEALING FROM ELDERLY CLIENTS

AUGUSTA, Maine --A former caseworker with the state Department of Health and Human Services has been jailed for 30 days for stealing more than \$9,000 from elderly and incapacitated clients whose interests he was assigned to protect.

Albert Bouchard, 47, of Limestone, who pleaded guilty to theft, was sentenced Friday in Aroostook County Superior Court to two years in prison, with all but 30 days suspended. After his release, he faces five months of house arrest and two years of probation, a time in which he must perform 200 hours of community service.

Over a 15-month period in 2001 through 2003, Bouchard stole money from clients and used it to buy fine jewelry, electronics, gift certificates and furniture for himself, his family and his girlfriend.

"Albert Bouchard worked for the agency that is charged with protecting the elderly from predators like Albert Bouchard. He committed a gross abuse of the trust placed in him by the state to care for our most vulnerable citizens," Attorney General Steve Rowe said Tuesday in a statement detailing the thefts.

Bouchard charged a \$300 digital camera to the account of an elderly woman with dementia and made several cash withdrawals from her account, Rowe said. While tapping another client's account to buy a \$1,300 large screen television for his home, he delivered a used, 27-inch TV to the nursing facility at which the client was living.

Two other accounts belonging to clients with dementia were charged for several pieces of jewelry, including a \$600 diamond anniversary ring and a \$700 gold rope chain necklace. Bouchard delivered inexpensive substitutes to the clients, who were then living at nursing care facilities, Rowe said.

Gift certificates charged on three client accounts to the Aroostook Centre Mall in Presque Isle were given as Christmas gifts to Bouchard's then wife and children and his girlfriend and her children.

Bouchard entered his guilty plea in May, after a jury was selected and the day before he was scheduled to go to trial. He paid full restitution at the time of sentencing.

"What made this case especially egregious was the calculated and deceptive nature of the theft," Assistant Attorney General Leanne Robbin said.

She said the state has several elder exploitation cases in the prosecutorial pipeline, "but typically, these are not people who are licensed social workers for the state who are stealing from the elderly."

More common, she said, are cases involving theft by a family member or "someone who comes in as a housekeeper, and gets the person's trust -- and checkbook."

Robbin said she was unaware of any similar misdeeds by state caseworkers but noted that the Maine Bureau of Adult and Elder Services has initiated checks within its system to reduce that possibility.

"Bouchard's conduct unfairly tarnishes the reputation of the many other dedicated caseworkers who strive to care and protect the elderly," Rowe said.

Police Search For Men Who Pretend To Be Plumbers To Prey On Elderly

New York

Police asked for the public's help Tuesday identifying two burglars who they say pose as plumbers and prey on elderly victims.

Police say the men have struck at least two apartments in Manhattan.

Investigators say one of the men pretends to check the pipes, while the other steals cash from the apartment. Both burglaries took place last Monday – one on the Upper West Side where an 81-year-old woman was robbed of \$400.

About an hour later in the East Village, a 92-year-old woman was robbed of about \$1,500.

Police ask anyone with information to call Crime Stoppers at 1-800-577-TIPS.

Funding Opportunity for your Program

RMS and NATI provide funding opportunities for Triads, Domestic Violence, and other projects. To participate, RMS requests that your organization collect used cell phones and contact them at:

911CellphoneBank.com or terrih@sheriffs.org
RMS pays for shipping phones to them and returns usable cell phones to: law enforcement, senior programs, and domestic violence organizations—to provide cell phones to those in need in your community. Salable phones are recycled, with funds being returned to your organization. Contact RMS or NATI today.

1450 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA 22314
800-424-7827 phone 703-519-8567 fax
triad@sheriffs.org www.nationaltriad.org



More Senior Safety related articles are located at www.nationaltriad.org; e-news section

Have you received a free cell phone?

Check your battery. This is a product advisory for the Nokia-branded BL-5C battery manufactured by Matsushita Battery Industrial Co. Ltd. of Japan between December 2005 and November 2006. This product advisory does not apply to any other Nokia battery.

Nokia has identified that in very rare cases the affected batteries could potentially experience over heating initiated by a short circuit while charging, causing the battery to dislodge. Nokia is working closely with relevant local authorities to investigate this situation.

Nokia has several suppliers for BL-5C batteries that have collectively produced more than 300 million BL-5C batteries. This advisory applies only to the 46 million batteries manufactured by Matsushita between December 2005 and November 2006. There have been approximately 100 incidents of over heating reported globally. No serious injuries or property damage have been reported.

Consumers with a BL-5C battery subject to this advisory should note that all of the approximately 100 incidents have occurred while charging the battery. According to Nokia's knowledge this issue does not affect any other use of the mobile device. Concerned consumers may want to monitor a mobile device while charging that contains a BL-5C battery subject to this product advisory.

While the occurrence in the BL-5C batteries produced by Matsushita in the time-period specified is very rare, for consumers wishing to do so, Nokia and Matsushita offer to replace for free any BL-5C battery subject to this product advisory.

The BL-5C batteries which are subject to the product advisory were used with the following Nokia models or separately as accessories:

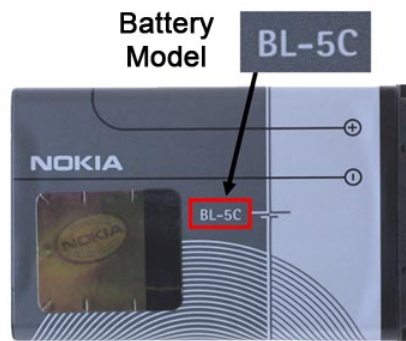
Nokia 1100, Nokia 1100c, Nokia 1101, Nokia 1108, Nokia 1110, Nokia 1112, Nokia 1255, Nokia 1315, Nokia 1600, Nokia 2112, Nokia 2118, Nokia 2255, Nokia 2272, Nokia 2275, Nokia 2300, Nokia 2300c, Nokia 2310, Nokia 2355, Nokia 2600, Nokia 2610, Nokia 2610b, Nokia 2626, Nokia 3100, Nokia 3105, Nokia 3120, Nokia 3125, Nokia 6030, Nokia 6085, Nokia 6086, Nokia 6108, Nokia 6175i, Nokia 6178i, Nokia 6230, Nokia 6230i, Nokia 6270, Nokia 6600, Nokia 6620, Nokia 6630, Nokia 6631, Nokia 6670, Nokia 6680, Nokia 6681, Nokia 6682, Nokia 6820, Nokia 6822, Nokia 7610, Nokia N70, Nokia N71, Nokia N72, Nokia N91, Nokia E50, Nokia E60

“Nokia” and “BL-5C” are printed on the front of the battery. On the back of the battery, the Nokia mark appears at the top, and the battery identification number (consisting of 26 characters) is found at the bottom.

If the battery identification number does not contain 26 characters, it is not subject to this product advisory.

If you are interested to know if your battery is part of this product advisory, please follow the two steps below:

1) Switch off your mobile device and check the battery model. If your battery is not a BL-5C model, you are not included in this product advisory and your product will not be replaced.



2) If your battery is a BL-5C model, remove the battery and check the 26-character identification number from the back of the battery. Enter the identification number in the field below and you will be advised if your battery may be replaced.



We have had no reported incidents with the 911 cell phone program. If you find you have the BL-5C battery, please visit this site in order to check your serial number. The box is found at the end of the article—Nokia will replace the battery at no charge.

<http://batteryreplacement.nokia.com/batteryreplacement/en/>

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