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Contact Kylie Mason

Phone (850) 245-0150



OFFICE OF THE
ATTORNEY GENERAL
STATE OF FLORIDA

Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

Attorney General Moody's Office of Statewide Prosecution Charges Three Women for Defrauding Senior Out of \$350,000



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody's Office of Statewide Prosecution filed criminal charges against three women for defrauding a Florida senior out of \$350,000. According to a Leesburg Police Department investigation, assisted by Attorney General Moody's Senior Protection Team, Kimberly Bitting obtained power of attorney over a neighbor—a senior widow. Bitting then unlawfully used the authority to issue checks from the victim's accounts to Bitting's account. Bitting also issued checks to accounts belonging to co-defendants Lara Larsen and Ashton Silvis.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "Three women, pretending to be concerned caregivers, took advantage of their neighbor, a grieving senior widow, by abusing power of attorney to steal hundreds of thousands of dollars. Older Floridians should be able to rely on those close to them in times of hardship and not worry about being exploited. Thanks to law enforcement partners and our Senior Protection Team, these defendants will face our Statewide Prosecutors in court."

According to the investigation, Bitting obtained power of attorney over a senior widow. Over an 18-month period, Bitting unlawfully used the power of attorney to issue checks from victim's accounts to Bitting's personal accounts and those of the co-defendants. Bitting falsely framed the checks to Silvis and Larsen as payments for caregiving and other work not performed.

Additionally, Bitting purchased two parcels of land using the victim's funds. The investigation determined that the defendants stole approximately \$350,000 from the victim's accounts.

Bitting is charged with three counts of elderly exploitation more than \$50,000, a first-degree felony, and one count of organized fraud more than \$50,000, a first-degree felony. Silvis is charged with one count of organized fraud more than \$20,000 but less than \$50,000, a second-degree felony. Larsen is charged with one count of organized fraud less than \$20,000, a third-degree felony. All defendants are also charged with one count of cashing or depositing an item with intent to defraud, a third-degree felony.

Attorney General Moody's SPT assisted in the investigation.

Attorney General Moody's OSP, in conjunction with the Lake County State Attorney's Office, will handle the case. Assistant Statewide Prosecutor Taylor Chatting is cross sworn as an Assistant State Attorney for the case.

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