



JACKSON COUNTY STATE'S ATTORNEY

Michael C. Carr, State's Attorney

Jackson County Courthouse • 1001 Walnut • Third Floor • Murphysboro, IL 62966
(618) 687-7200 • FAX (618) 687-7215

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Michael C. Carr, State's Attorney

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MURPHYSBORO WOMAN IS SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR FINANCIAL EXPLOITATION OF AN ELDERLY PERSON

Michael C. Carr, Jackson County State's Attorney, announced today that a Murphysboro woman was sentenced September 16, 2014, for Financial Exploitation of an Elderly Person to the Illinois Department of Corrections.

Celeste A. Locke, 49, of Murphysboro, IL, who was charged in Jackson County Circuit Court with Financial Exploitation of an Elderly Person, was sentenced to serve 6 years in the Illinois Department of Corrections. The defendant will serve a two year period of Mandatory Supervised Release upon her release from the Department of Corrections.

Beginning in October, 2012, the Murphysboro Police Department was alerted to a possible financial exploitation of an elderly man who lived in Murphysboro, Illinois. Representatives for Shawnee Alliance for Seniors had been working with the victim, who was 84 at that time. An Adult Protective Services agent for Shawnee Alliance had been spending a considerable amount of time with the victim, communicating with the victim and monitoring his financial situation after receiving reports of concerned acquaintances of the victim. Shawnee Alliance discovered that the victim seemed to be giving a substantial amount of money to a relative, ultimately identified as Celeste Locke.

During the time Shawnee Alliance spent with the victim, they noticed that the reasons the victim was giving money to the defendant didn't quite make sense. As the investigation continued, records were kept regarding contact made by the defendant to the victim, reasons the victim was lending money to the defendant and other circumstances surrounding this situation. In short, the defendant told the victim a number of stories concerning her alleged deceased husband, and a potential large settlement she was to receive and other stories regarding medical operations she was having. The defendant made a number of promises to repay the victim from this alleged settlement but would always run into difficulties, such as with the medical operations.

Detectives with the Murphysboro Police Department and the Adult Protective Services agent with Shawnee Alliance observed that the victim had difficulties with his memory and they

believed he was being taken advantage of by the defendant. Detectives and Shawnee Alliance also discovered that the defendant had taken the victim to obtain short term pay-day style loans. Ultimately, a large number of financial statements were obtained from the victim's bank, a number of loan providers and Western Union regarding money being sent to the defendant. The total amount of money sent to the defendant was well in excess of \$5,000.00. During the time of the investigation, the victim's accounts had nearly been depleted.

An arrest warrant was issued for the defendant related to this investigation, and on June 4, 2014, the defendant was located, arrested and interviewed by detectives. Ultimately, the defendant admitted telling the victim a number of false statements. The defendant admitted to investigators that she had never been married, did not stand to receive any settlement money, and had not had any medical procedures performed on her in the recent past. The defendant admitted using some of the money she obtained from the victim to support a drug addiction.

This conviction is the result of the hard work and determination of Shawnee Alliance for Seniors. The Murphysboro Police Department and the Jackson County State's Attorney's Office also assisted in this investigation. Assistant State's Attorney Casey Bloodworth was responsible for the prosecution of this case.