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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

Caretaker Charged with Theft from Florida Senior



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody and the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office today announced the arrest of a live-in caretaker charged with stealing thousands of dollars from a Florida senior. The caretaker, Cynthia Sirmans, used the victim's credit card while the senior spent time in the hospital due to a life-threatening illness. During a four-month period, Sirmans charged more than $47,000 to the victim's card. The transactions ranged from gift-card purchases to expensive, radio-controlled cars.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "The defendant in this case was trusted to take care of a Florida senior, but while the victim was in the hospital with a life-threatening illness, she used the opportunity to rack up tens of thousands of dollars in fraudulent credit-card charges in the victim's name. Working with the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office, we uncovered the scheme and now the so-called caregiver will have to face my Statewide Prosecutors and answer for her crimes."

Hillsborough County Sheriff Chad Chronister said, "It's truly despicable when a vulnerable person in our community entrusts their life and finances to another, and then is taken advantage of so cruelly. It is the work of some of the worst in society. Our detectives are working diligently to seek out these criminals and prosecute them to the fullest extent of the law."

According to the investigation, Sirmans made more than 100 charges to the 88-year-old victim's credit card during the four-month period from January to April. The majority of the transactions went to purchase gift cards, and all transactions occurred in the Tampa Bay area. Sirmans spent nearly $6,000 on five radio-controlled cars. During an interview, the defendant admitted to making the transactions on the victim's card and using the victim's bank account to pay off charges in order to hide the transactions.

Attorney General Moody’s Office of Statewide Prosecution charged Sirmans with exploitation of an elderly person or disabled adult and criminal use of personal identification information, both second-degree felonies. Senior Assistant Statewide Prosecutor Whitney Mackay will prosecute the case.