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Elderly residents' IDs stolen

Thieves rang up big bills on credit in their names

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Fourteen residents at two Northern Kentucky nursing homes couldn't figure out why they were being billed for large-screen televisions, clothes dryers and hundreds of thousands of dollars in electronics.

The answer is because nursing home employees from Greater Cincinnati stole the identities of elderly residents, got credit cards in their names and ran up major bills, prosecutors say.

Michael Stallings, 33, of Mount Airy, the first of six people officials accused of being involved in the ring to be sentenced, was sent to prison Tuesday for three years after pleading guilty earlier this month to receiving stolen property, forgery and attempted identity theft.

Stallings told Hamilton County Common Judge Norbert Nadel that he was sorry for hurting the elderly. "I feel bad because this is not my character," he said.

While Assistant Prosecutor Andy Berghausen admitted that Stallings didn't steal identities, he did cash checks on the fake accounts and helped pick up the goods bought with the credit cards.

The scam resulted in up to \$250,000 being charged to the credit cards, Berghausen said.

The thefts started when two women got jobs at Northern Kentucky nursing homes.

Kimberly Knight, 32, of Colerain Township, was hired by Carmel Manor nursing home in Fort Thomas. LaToya Bounds, also known as LaToya Lucky, 32, of North Avondale, was hired by Atria Highland Crossing in Fort Wright, Berghausen said.

Each is accused of stealing identities of those they were supposed to be helping.

Both Knight and Bounds have long criminal histories.

Knight has prior arrests for attempted misuse of credit cards, receiving stolen property, weapons charges and robbery.

Cindy Dullaghan, assistant administrator of Carmel Manor, declined Tuesday to discuss her company's hiring process or how their employee was able to steal residents' identities.

Bounds has prior arrests for receiving stolen property, theft, falsification, domestic violence, drug charges and stealing identities in 2007 from a Springfield Township nursing home and using them to get \$5,631 in goods and cash.

Kathy McCameron, executive director of Atria Highland Crossing, said Bounds' background check showed no criminal history.

That was because Bounds wasn't the name she gave the nursing home when she applied. She used another identity that had no criminal history, McCameron said.

Bounds worked just one shift at Atria before McCameron told her to leave "because of some other incidents" that McCameron refused to specify.

The identity thefts started coming to light last summer when nursing home residents received bills for credit cards that they didn't know they had.

Those credit cards paid for pricey electronics as well as bills for cell phones and cable television.

The U.S. Secret Service, U.S. Postal Inspectors and police departments began investigating.

They went to addresses where the credit cards and bills were sent as well as the stores where the large televisions and other items were picked up and signed for.

The result was the arrest of Stallings, his girlfriend Knight, who has pleaded guilty to multiple counts of identify fraud, tampering with records and forgery. She will be sentenced May 8.

Four others have either entered pleas or are wanted:

Bounds, still wanted by police, charged with multiple counts of identity fraud and forgery.

Markittia Adams, 34, of Winton Hills. She has pleaded guilty to two counts of forgery and one count of identity fraud and will be sentenced May 22;

Lakeshia Douglas, aka Latoya Jenkins, 25, of College Hill, charged with identify fraud and forgery. She has yet to be arrested.

Crystal Porter, 25, of College Hill, who pleaded guilty to attempted identity fraud, will be sentenced May 22.

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