



U.S. Department of Justice

Ronald C. Machen Jr.
*United States Attorney for the
District of Columbia*

*Judiciary Center
555 Fourth St. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530*

PRESS RELEASE

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For Information Contact:

Public Affairs

(202) 252-6933

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Woman Pleads Guilty to Stealing More Than \$250,000 From Vulnerable Adult Who Trusted and Relied Upon Her - Defendant Took Control of Victim's Money, Spent it on Vacations, Other Expenses -

WASHINGTON - Lori M. Hawkins, 37, of Washington, D.C., pled guilty today in connection with her theft of more than \$250,000 from a vulnerable adult who had known her for decades, U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr. announced.

Hawkins entered her guilty plea to one count of interstate transportation of stolen property before the Honorable Richard J. Leon of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. She is scheduled to be sentenced on November 18, 2011, and faces a statutory maximum sentence of ten years of imprisonment. Under federal guidelines, Hawkins likely faces a sentencing range of between 24 and 37 months in prison. As part of the plea agreement, she agreed to pay full restitution to the victim and also agreed to an order of forfeiture.

According to a statement of offense agreed to by the government and Hawkins, the victim, now 62, suffered brain tumors while in her late 20s, which left her with diminished mental capacity. From that point forward, the victim could no longer care for herself and relied on her family to take care of her. Hawkins had known the victim since Hawkins's youth because they were next-door neighbors.

The victim's brother, who was her last close relative and also her caretaker, died in 2007, leaving the victim as the sole heir to his estate. The victim inherited more than \$400,000 from her brother's estate. After the victim's brother died, Hawkins produced a document purporting to grant her power of attorney over the victim. Using the document, Hawkins collected the money in the estate and transferred it into different bank accounts that Hawkins had set up.

Hawkins then began to use the money for her own personal benefit and for the benefit of a friend. Among other purchases, Hawkins took trips to London, Las Vegas, Jacksonville, and Greensboro, N.C., using the victim's money.

After her brother died, the victim resided at an assisted living facility, and she spent her days at an adult day care center. In 2007 and 2008, Hawkins arranged for payment of the costs associated with the victim's care using money from the brother's estate. In early 2009, however, Hawkins stopped paying for the victim's care after the money from the estate ran out – due to Hawkins's use of the money for her own benefit and for the benefit of Hawkins's friend.

In total, Hawkins took \$269,630 of the victim's money and converted it to her personal use by fraudulent means from 2007 through 2009.

In announcing today's guilty plea, U.S. Attorney Machen commended the investigative efforts of Detective Vincent Tucci of the Metropolitan Police Department. He also praised the work of members of the U.S. Attorney's Office, including Administrative Staff Assistant Jamasee Lucas, Assistant U.S. Attorney Scott Sroka, who is handling the criminal forfeiture aspects of the case, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Bryan Seeley, who is prosecuting the case.

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