



Department of Justice

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Ashland Man Pleads Guilty to Representative Payee Fraud

Defendant was converting funds for personal care patients to his personal use.

ASHLAND, Ky. – Today, an Ashland man admitted in federal court that he unlawfully used representative payee funds, which were received on behalf of individuals living in the Artrip Personal Care Home in Ashland, Kentucky.

Mitchell Allen Artrip, 68, pleaded guilty to one count of representative payee fraud before United States District Court Judge David Bunning. Artrip admitted that, in his role as part owner of Artrip Personal Care home, he received representative payee benefits from the Social Security Administration on behalf of certain individuals living in his personal care home. According to the plea agreement, between November 2013 and November 2017, Artrip received representative payee funds for more than twenty individuals, totaling \$241,142. Artrip admitted he spent a total of \$97,806 of those representative payee funds on expenses unrelated to the use and benefit of the beneficiaries, including on his two rental properties and personal farm.

Artrip agreed pay \$97,806 in restitution to the victims. The restitution will be divided among the victims according to the plea agreement. Pursuant to the plea agreement, Artrip also agreed to sell the personal care home and withdraw as the representative payee for any current Social Security beneficiaries within the next sixty days.

Robert M. Duncan, Jr., United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Kentucky, and Wayne R. Warren, Acting Special Agent in Charge, Atlanta Field Division of the Social Security Administration, Office of Inspector General, jointly made the announcement. The investigation is part of the Department of Justice's Elder Justice Initiative and was assisted by the Kentucky Elder Justice Task Force, which is comprised of federal, state, and local law enforcement and government agencies working together to protect the Commonwealth's elderly population from fraud and abuse.

The investigation was directed by the SSA-OIG. The United States was represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Kate K. Smith.

Artrip is scheduled to be sentenced on January 24, 2020 at 9:00 a.m., in federal court in Ashland. He faces up to five years in prison. However, any sentence will be imposed by the Court, after its consideration of the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and the applicable federal statutes.

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