



Elderly woman found in squalor, Son charged with abuse and embezzlement

Posted by Bryn Mickle | The Flint Journal April 30, 2009 10:00AM

FLINT, Michigan -- An elderly Flint woman was found living on a urine-soaked couch and wrapped in a tattered blanket crawling with roaches and maggots.

Her son, who also was her landlord, charged his 73-year-old mother \$450 a month to live in an apartment with no heat or running water, police said.

"The place wasn't habitable for an animal, let alone a human," said Genesee County Sheriff Robert J. Pickell.

Anthony V. Cunturso, 47, is being held on \$20,000 bond in the Genesee County Jail on charges of embezzlement of a vulnerable adult and second-degree vulnerable adult abuse.

Cunturso's mother was found □ April 23 after the county elder abuse team got a tip about an incontinent passenger who had been riding the bus.

Three investigators with the Genesee County Elder Abuse and Exploitation Prevention program gagged when they walked inside her Oak Street apartment.

The only source of heat in the apartment was a grease-stained stove, said Pickell.

"It had been like that since Christmastime," said Pickell, adding that Cunturso lives above the apartment.

The woman told investigators she had complained to her son but that nothing was done.

Adult Protective Services workers apparently had gotten anonymous tips about the woman's living conditions in January and October of last year but got no answer when they knocked on the door to check, said Pickell.

Pickell said the woman, who is hard of hearing and blind in one eye, also did not answer the door when his investigators went to house on two □ occasions earlier this month.

It wasn't until the third visit last week, when investigators found the back door open, that they were able to go inside.

The woman was immediately taken from the house and is living with her sister pending placement in an adult foster care home.

Cunturso has a May 7 hearing in Flint District Court and faces up to five years in prison on the embezzlement

charge. The abuse charge carries a maximum penalty of four years in prison.

Genesee County Prosecutor David Leyton said the allegations are part of a disturbing trend of elder abuse in the county.

"It's shocking that anyone would do that to their own mother," said Leyton.

"We're seeing way too much of this."

In January, a Flint Township man was charged with murder for allegedly neglecting his mother to the point where she died.

Last year, the nephew of a 95-year-old woman was accused of taking \$3,000 a month from his aunt to care for her as she lived in squalor at her Flint Township home.

"It's the caregivers who are doing this," said Pickell.

Anyone with information about suspected elder abuse is asked to call (810) 762-4022.

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