



Flint brothers charged in elder abuse case involving elderly grandfather

Posted by Bryn Mickle | The Flint Journal June 18, 2009 10:00AM

FLINT, Michigan -- A fistfight between two brothers over their grandfather's Vicodin has led to elder abuse charges for the pair.

Randy D. Brooks, 17, and his brother Travis, 20, are accused of allowing their 70-year-old grandfather to live in filth and ignoring his needs as a diabetic.

Flint Journal extras Where to get help Anyone who needs help caring for a vulnerable adult or believes someone is being abused should contact Genesee County's elder abuse team at (810) 762-4022

The charges are the latest in a string of local elder abuse cases that include a Flint Township man charged with murder after officials claimed his neglect resulted in his mother's death last year.

In the case of the Brooks brothers, police were called to their Tuxedo Avenue home June 2 after neighbors reported them fighting on the lawn.

The fight was over by the time police arrived but investigators noticed something amiss when they went to the front door to talk to the brothers.

Inside a house strewn with garbage and reeking of cat urine, police found the brother's elderly grandfather with a dangerously high blood sugar level.

"He was very confused," said Genesee County Sheriff Robert J. Pickell, who said the grandfather thought the year was 1980.

Deputies contacted the county's elder abuse team and it was discovered the grandfather's blood sugar was more than four times the normal level. The elderly man has been hospitalized twice in the past three weeks to control his blood sugar.

Pickell said investigators learned the brothers were acting as caretakers for their grandfather but had not given him his medicine in more than a week.

They had recently asked his doctor to prescribe the grandfather Vicodin with plans to take the pills and sell them, said Pickell. A single Vicodin pill typically fetches between \$4 and \$8 on the street.

In addition to the pills, Pickell said the brothers also had control of the grandfather's checkbook and were trying to convince him to grant them power of attorney.

Pickell said Randy Brooks was arrested at the house after he resisted a pat-down search, resulting in sheriff's deputies using a Taser to subdue him. He is charged with three counts of resisting police and one count of second-degree vulnerable adult abuse.

Travis Brooks also is charged with second-degree vulnerable adult abuse, a 4-year felony.

Police also are investigating where the brothers got a three-foot-tall pile of copper wire found at the house.

Pickell said the case illustrates the ongoing problem of vulnerable adults being taken advantage of by caregivers.

"These two weren't being caregivers. These guys should be behind bars," said Pickell.

"I'll care for them."

Genesee County Prosecutor David S. Leyton called the behavior of the brothers "pretty low."

"The poor man needed his insulin. ... It's just terrible."

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