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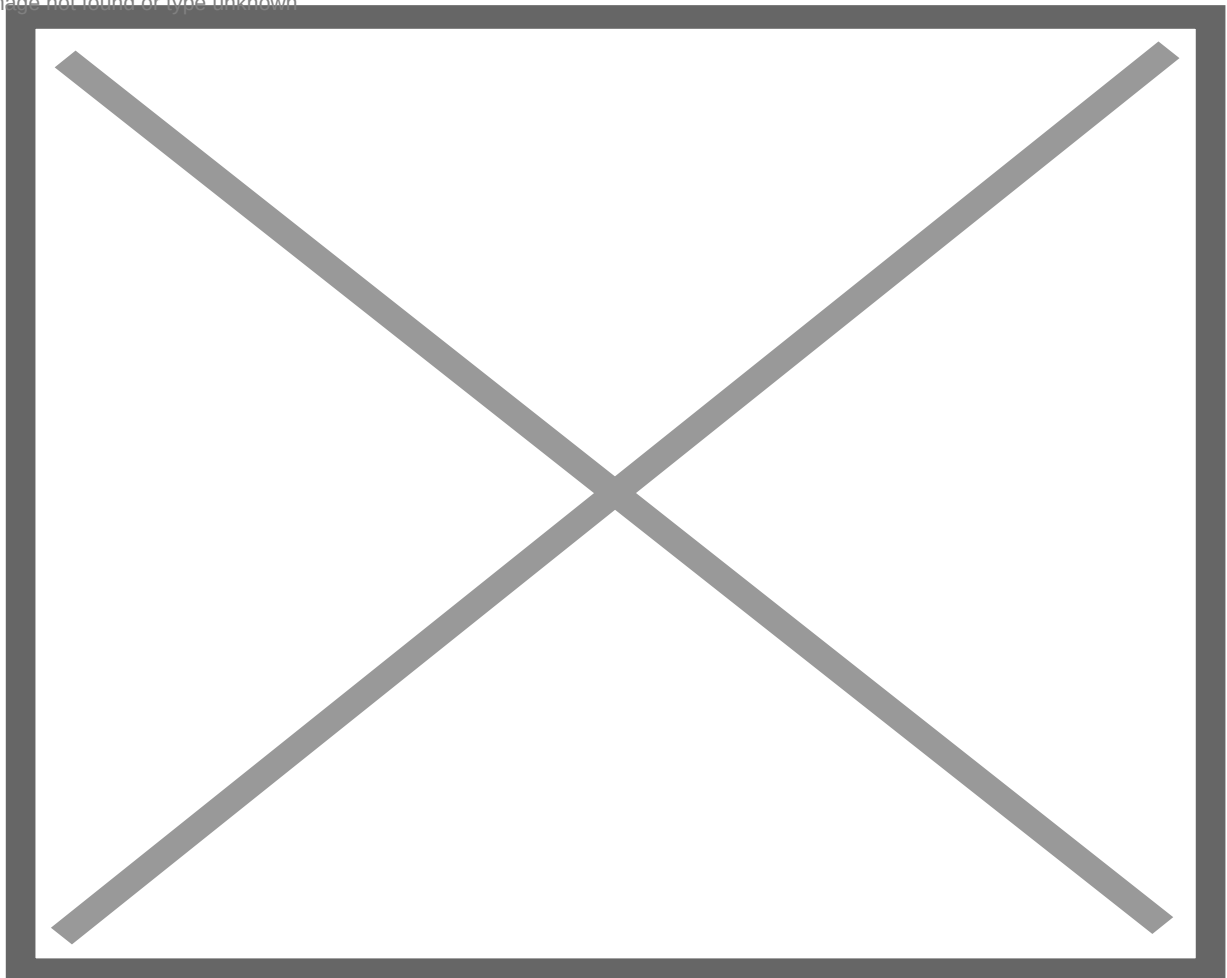
## St. Thomas Woman Accused of Exploiting Elderly Mother for \$133,769 While Neglect Allegedly Left Victim in Deplorable Conditions

DOJ says Henrietta Harlow allegedly controlled her mother's finances, home and rental income while the Alzheimer's patient suffered neglect, hunger, unsanitary bedding, dehydration, infections, bed sores and serious physical deterioration.

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Henrietta Harlow. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT.

The V.I. Department of Justice has arrested a St. Thomas woman accused of financially exploiting, abusing and neglecting her elderly mother, who investigators say suffered from Alzheimer's dementia, required 24-hour supervision, and was allegedly left in unsafe and

unsanitary conditions despite the defendant's control over the victim's money, property and rental income.

According to the VIDOJ, its Medicaid Fraud Control Unit arrested Henrietta Harlow in connection with an investigation involving the alleged financial exploitation, abuse and neglect of an elderly vulnerable adult suffering from Alzheimer's dementia.

The Affidavit in Support of Arrest Warrant filed by the MFCU states that investigators determined the victim was an elderly woman who required 24-hour supervision and assistance with activities of daily living, and who suffered from progressive cognitive decline associated with Alzheimer's dementia.

Investigators further determined that Ms. Harlow, the victim's daughter, exercised authority over the victim's financial affairs through a General Power of Attorney and Durable Power of Attorney while the victim lacked the capacity to independently manage her financial and personal affairs.

The investigation alleges that while occupying a position of trust and control over the victim's finances and property, Ms. Harlow engaged in a pattern of withdrawals, transfers and other financial transactions involving the victim's funds and property for her own benefit.

According to investigators, Ms. Harlow obtained control over funds and assets belonging to the victim totaling approximately \$133,769.69. Investigators also determined that she obtained control over the victim's home, a two-story residential property consisting of two one-bedroom apartments on the first floor and a three-bedroom unit on the upper floor, as well as rental income generated from the property.

The investigation found that through the transfer of the victim's property and rental income, Ms. Harlow allegedly obtained control over assets belonging to the victim with a value significantly exceeding the funds withdrawn from the victim's bank account.

Investigators also allege that after being added to the victim's bank account, Ms. Harlow established a monthly standing order authorizing the automatic transfer of the victim's Social Security funds and other money from the victim's account into an account controlled by Ms. Harlow. Records obtained during the investigation reportedly showed that the automatic transfers remained in place for years while the victim suffered significant cognitive decline and required supervision, resulting in repeated transfers of funds from the victim's account for Ms. Harlow's benefit.

The investigation further alleges that despite having access to the victim's financial resources and the ability to secure care and services, Ms. Harlow failed to provide adequate supervision, hygiene, nutrition, medical attention and safe living conditions.

Investigators determined that Ms. Harlow allegedly refused to purchase or pay for basic necessities for the victim, including hygiene items, food, clean bedding, clothing and caregiving assistance, despite having access to and control over the victim's funds and property.

Witness statements reportedly reflected that the victim was at times left hungry and without adequate food in the home, requiring Homemakers aides and other Department of Human Services personnel to purchase food and basic necessities for the victim using their own personal funds.

Records, witness statements, photographs and medical documentation obtained during the investigation reportedly showed that the victim was repeatedly found in severely unsanitary and neglectful conditions, including lying in urine-soaked bedding, and suffering from dehydration, acute kidney injury, infections and bed sores associated with prolonged immobility and inadequate care.

Investigators further determined that the residence was in deplorable condition, including reports of rodent infestation, food debris, contaminated and urine-soaked bedding, unsanitary living conditions, and an overall environment unfit for a vulnerable adult requiring full-time care and supervision.

According to DOJ, investigators also determined that family members residing outside the territory were paying individuals to assist in caring for the victim and intervening to prevent utility disconnections and other unsafe conditions while Ms. Harlow allegedly maintained control over and used the victim's financial resources for her own benefit.

An out-of-territory family member described the victim's condition as follows:

"[Victim] was lying on a bed in a compromised physical state, appearing stiff and unable to move properly. The sleeping area was unsanitary, with food debris, ants and other contaminants present on and around the bed."

Another out-of-territory family member reported that the victim was at times found lying on a mattress without sheets, in urine-soaked conditions, and unable to move without assistance.

Investigators further determined that the victim developed serious bodily injuries, including pressure ulcers and significant physical deterioration, while dependent upon Ms. Harlow for care and while Ms. Harlow allegedly maintained control over the victim's financial resources.

Ms. Harlow was arrested on charges including criminal neglect of an older or dependent adult, financial abuse of an older or dependent adult, and financial exploitation of an older or dependent adult.

Attorney General Gordon Rhea said the Department of Justice remains committed to protecting elderly and vulnerable adults.

"The Virgin Islands Department of Justice remains committed to protecting elderly and vulnerable adults from abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation. Individuals who exploit positions of trust for personal gain while placing vulnerable persons at risk of harm will be held accountable."

The MFCU thanked the Department of Human Services Homemakers Program, medical providers and partner agencies that assisted during the investigation.

DOJ noted that the charges contained in the arrest warrant are accusations, and Ms. Harlow is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty in a court of law.

The Medicaid Fraud Control Unit is fully funded by the United States Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General. The unit investigates and prosecutes Medicaid provider fraud and the abuse, neglect and financial exploitation of vulnerable adults receiving health care services or residing in health care facilities or community-based settings.

Anyone with information concerning Medicaid fraud or the abuse, neglect or exploitation of a vulnerable adult may contact the MFCU at 888-404-MFCU, or the Virgin Islands Department of Justice at 774-5666 ext. 10122.

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