

St. Mary's County Man Pleads Guilty To Stealing Over \$409,000 In Government Benefits

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GREENBELT, Md. – Victor Demattia, age 64, of Mechanicsville, Maryland, pleaded guilty yesterday to theft of government property, for stealing more than \$400,000 in Civil Service Retirement benefits and Social Security benefits.

The guilty plea was announced by United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Robert K. Hur; Special Agent in Charge Michael McGill of the Social Security Administration - Office of Inspector General; and Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Investigations Thomas W. South of the Office of Personnel Management – Office of Inspector General.

According to Demattia's plea agreement, from February 2009 through June 2018, Demattia stole monthly Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) pension payments and Social Security Retirement Insurance Benefit (RIB) payments intended for his mother after her death, resulting in a loss to the United States Government of \$409,421.

Specifically, at the time of his mother's death, she was receiving CSRS pension payments from OPM and RIB payments from SSA by direct deposit to a joint account held by Demattia and his mother. When his mother died, Demattia did not notify SSA or OPM of her death, and as a result, SSA and OPM continued to make monthly deposits into the joint bank account. Demattia admitted that he withdrew the CSRS and RIB funds each month, typically by checks he endorsed, payable to himself or to his now-defunct medical transport business, Patriot Medical Transport.

On March 5, 2019, during an interview conducted by agents of the SSA Office of Inspector General and OPM Office of Inspector General, Demattia admitted that he spent his mother's RIB and CSRS payments after her death. He stated that he knew he was not entitled to the money, but spent the fund to cover expenses for his failing business such as payroll, fuel, receivables, and other operating expenses, as well as on personal expenses through debit card purchases after the closure of his business.

In total, Demattia stole \$369,018 from OPM and \$40,403 from SSA after his mother's death. As part of his plea agreement, Demattia will be required to forfeit and to pay a money judgment in the amount of \$409,421.

Demattia faces a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison for theft of government property. Actual sentences for federal crimes are typically less than the maximum penalties. As part of his plea agreement, the government has agreed to recommend a sentence of no more than 18 months in federal prison. U.S. District Judge Peter J. Messitte has scheduled sentencing for September 24, 2020 at 9:30 a.m.

United States Attorney Robert K. Hur praised the SSA Office of Inspector General and OPM Office of Inspector General for their work in the investigation. Mr. Hur thanked Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael Davio, who is prosecuting the case.

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