



BCPO News

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GoFundMe Defendant Sentenced to Court-Supervised Drug Treatment Program

Burlington County Prosecutor Scott Coffina announced that one of three defendants charged in the GoFundMe campaign that misled donors with a fictitious story received a sentence today that will allow him to avoid incarceration if he successfully completes a New Jersey Superior Court-sponsored drug treatment program.

Under the terms of the sentence, Johnny Bobbitt Jr., 36, of Philadelphia, was placed on special probation for up to five years while he fulfills the requirements of the drug court program.

Participants in the program must obtain employment and adhere to a tightly-structured regimen of treatment and recovery services, are frequently tested for drug use, and must satisfy other conditions as well.

“Mr. Bobbitt was an instrumental part of the fraudulent campaign; indeed he was the face of it,” Prosecutor Coffina said. “He admittedly promoted and perpetuated the false narrative that he had given his last \$20 to his co-conspirator Kate McClure when she had run out of gas on the side of the highway, with the intent to manipulate the goodwill of others to obtain money for himself. That said, there is no denying that Johnny Bobbitt has struggled with addiction, and that his addiction was a factor in his criminal conduct. The proposed agreed-upon sentence, in the State’s view, provides sufficient accountability to Johnny Bobbitt for his active role in this fraud through the vigorous standards of a drug court probation, with the certainty of a five-year state prison sentence if he does not adhere to those standards and take advantage of this opportunity. This sentence affords him the chance to turn his life around. We wish him well in the program.”

Bobbitt was charged late last year, along with co-defendants Katelyn McClure of Bordentown and Mark D’Amico of Florence, with concocting a feel-good story that compelled more than 14,000 kind-hearted individuals ultimately to contribute more than \$400,000 to their cause.

Bobbitt pled guilty in March to Conspiracy to Commit Theft by Deception (Second Degree) before the Hon. Christopher J. Garrenger, J.S.C., who oversees the drug court program in the Burlington County vicinage. Judge Garrenger told Bobbitt today after imposing the sentence that he looks forward to working with him in drug court, and also stated from the bench that he considers it to be a material condition of Bobbitt’s sentence that he cooperates in the case against D’Amico and McClure, as he agreed to do when he pled guilty.

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D'Amico, 39, and McClure, 29, are facing charges of Theft by Deception (Second Degree) and Conspiracy to Commit Theft by Deception (Second Degree). Their cases are pending presentation to a Burlington County Grand Jury for possible indictment. McClure has a hearing scheduled for Monday, April 15 at 2 p.m., before Judge Garrenger.

Their "Paying it Forward" GoFundMe campaign was created on November 10, 2017, soon after D'Amico, who was then McClure's boyfriend, took a picture of McClure and Bobbitt standing in front of the Girard Avenue exit ramp on Interstate 95 in Philadelphia.

The campaign listed a goal of \$10,000 to provide Bobbitt, who was homeless, with rent for an apartment, a reliable vehicle, and six months of living expenses, among other things. But the incoming funds far exceeded their target. In total, more than \$403,000 was contributed during the 2017 holiday season to help Bobbitt.

During his plea proceeding in March, Bobbitt told the court that both D'Amico and McClure used the donated money for personal expenses, including gambling, and also provided him with money and transportation to purchase illicit drugs.

Within a few months of the campaign's creation, all of the donated funds had been spent. Once he realized the money had been squandered, Bobbitt took civil action against D'Amico and McClure. He alleged in August 2018 through his attorneys that he had only received approximately \$75,000 of the funds raised on his behalf.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant Prosecutor Andrew McDonnell, supervisor of the BCPO Financial Crimes Unit. The investigation was conducted by the Prosecutor's Office Financial Crimes Unit and High-Tech Crimes Unit, with assistance from the Florence Township Police Department.

All persons are considered innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

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