



BCPO News

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Second Defendant Pleads Guilty in Fraudulent GoFundMe Campaign Case

Burlington County Prosecutor Scott Coffina announced that the second of three defendants charged in the fictitious GoFundMe campaign that misled donors into contributing more than \$402,000 to a fabricated cause pled guilty today in Superior Court.

Under the terms of an agreement with the Prosecutor's Office, Katelyn McClure of Bordentown, 29, will serve a four-year term in New Jersey state prison in exchange for pleading guilty to Theft by Deception (Second Degree). The plea was entered before the Hon. Christopher J. Garrenger, J.S.C., who set sentencing for June 3.

McClure was charged late last year, along with co-defendants Johnny Bobbitt, 36, of Philadelphia, and Mark D'Amico, 39, of Florence, with concocting a feel-good story that compelled more than 14,000 people to contribute money believing it would go to help Bobbitt, who was homeless and living on the streets of Philadelphia.

Bobbitt pled guilty in March to Conspiracy to Commit Theft by Deception (Second Degree), and was admitted into a Superior Court drug treatment program last week. The program allows those with addiction problems to seek treatment instead of being incarcerated. However, if Bobbitt fails to adhere to the tightly-structured regimen of treatment and recovery services, which includes frequent testing for drug use, he could be sentenced to five years in state prison.

As part of their plea agreements, both McClure and Bobbitt agreed to make restitution in the amount of \$402,766 and must testify against D'Amico, who faces charges of Theft by Deception (Second Degree) and Conspiracy to Commit Theft by Deception (Second Degree). His case is scheduled to be presented next month to a Burlington County Grand Jury for possible indictment.

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 fairy tale narrative that accompanied the photo indicated that McClure had run out of gas, and Bobbitt spent his last \$20 to help her get back on her way.

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The campaign listed a goal of \$10,000 to provide Bobbitt 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, and were quickly spent by McClure and D'Amico on gambling and personal items such as a BMW, a New Year's trip to Las Vegas, a helicopter ride over the Grand Canyon and Louis Vuitton hand bags.

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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