



Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office
Southern District of Texas

Tim Johnson • United States Attorney

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HURRICANE KATRINA EVACUEE CONVICTED OF DEFRAUDING DECEASED FATHER'S PENSION PLAN

(HOUSTON) - Deanne Snowball, 50, of New Orleans, La., has been convicted of stealing thousands of dollars from her deceased father's pension plan, United States Attorney Tim Johnson announced today.

Appearing on Tuesday, Jan. 12, 2010, before United States District Judge David Hittner, Snowball admitted that between March 1998 and June 2006 she fraudulently cashed a total of nearly \$50,000 in monthly pension checks from the Louisiana Carpenters Regional Council Pension Plan (LCRCP) that were addressed to her father Edward Plessey who passed away in February 1998.

The investigation conducted by the Department of Labor Office of Inspector General (DOL-OIG) and Employee Benefit Security Administration (DOL-EBSA) proved that the LCRCP was unaware of Plessey's death and continued to mail his monthly pension checks to his last known address in New Orleans through August 2005. Hurricane Katrina made landfall in New Orleans on Aug. 29, 2005, and Snowball evacuated from New Orleans to Houston. Due to the disruption caused by Hurricane Katrina, the LCRCP did not issue pension payments in Plessey's name for some months. In April 2006, Snowball sent a letter to the LCRCP administrator providing a new address for her father in Houston and requesting that her name be put on her father's subsequent checks because he had allegedly "lost his ID" during the Hurricane and she needed to help him negotiate the checks. In response the LCRCP sent two checks – both in Plessey's name - to Snowball's Houston address. Those two checks were ultimately deposited into a Bank of America account assigned to Snowball.

As a result of some additional suspicious communications from Snowball, the LCRCP suspended further payments pending an investigation into Plessey's whereabouts. The investigation confirmed Plessey's 1998 death and verified the bank account into which Snowball deposit the two 2006 pension checks was the same account she used to receive FEMA payments after being displaced by Katrina. The LCRCP issued checks totaling \$49,745.50 after Plessey's death which Snowball converted to her own use by forging her deceased father's signature and negotiating the checks.

Snowball has been permitted to remain on bond pending her sentencing hearing set for April 12, 2010, at 9:45 a.m. She faces up to five years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine for her conviction.

This case was investigated by the DOL-OIG and the DOL-EBSA and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Jason Varnado.

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