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- State of Georgia -

NEWS RELEASE

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INSURANCE FRAUD VICTIM RECEIVES \$150,000 IN RESTITUTION

Atlanta, GA – A year and a half after a married couple accused of stealing more than \$150,000 was arrested for insurance fraud, the victim in the case can rest easy. On Friday in Henry County Superior Court, JoAnn Hardin and her husband Jonathan Hardin pleaded guilty and a judge ordered them to pay \$150,000 in restitution to the victim who lost nearly everything in the January 2017 fire.

On January 7th, 2017, the victim's house burnt down. The day immediately following the fire, JoAnn Hardin was in touch with the victim explaining that she knew what she was going through and that she was there to help her.

Soon after, Mrs. Hardin introduced the victim to Jonathan Hardin, the "contractor" in the case. During the investigation, it was revealed that Mrs. Hardin never told the victim that Jonathan was her husband and it was revealed that Mr. Hardin was not a licensed contractor.

Once the Hardin's had their foot in the door with the victim, they began to implement their scheme with forged documents and falsified invoices. A few months later, they had stolen more than \$150,000 in insurance money from the victim for their personal use.

Records show that the Hardin's had taken \$50,000 of the money out in cash withdrawals, spent \$30,000 at restaurants and hotels, and spent another almost \$3,000 in one night at a strip club in Atlanta.

On January 30th, 2018, JoAnn and Jonathan Hardin were arrested by agents in the Fraud Investigations Division and each charged with 1 Count of Insurance Fraud, 1 Count of I.D. Fraud, 1 Count of Forgery, 1 Count of Theft by Conversion, and 1 Count of Operating as a Residential Contractor Without a License.

This past Friday, two and a half years after the fire, the couple was ordered to return \$150,000 in restitution (which the victim has already received) and each individual was sentenced to 10 years of probation, 100 hours community service, and ordered to take theft classes for their crimes.

Agents in the Fraud Investigations Division worked closely with the Henry County District Attorney's Office throughout the course of this investigation and prosecution.

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