



RIVERSIDE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY
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**PALM DESERT MAN SENTENCED TO MORE THAN NINE YEARS IN PRISON AND
FOR ANNUITIES SCAM INVOLVING 13 ELDERLY VICTIMS**

Judge also orders man to pay \$3.4 million in restitution

RIVERSIDE – A Palm Desert man has been sentenced to more than nine years in prison and ordered to pay \$3.4 million in restitution for an annuities scam that targeted elderly victims.

On Tuesday, July 14, 2015, John Paul Slawinski, DOB: 8-3-54, was sentenced to nine years, four months in state prison by Superior Court Judge Helios Hernandez. The judge ordered Slawinski to pay restitution of more than \$2.8 million to 13 separate victims – all in their 70s or 80s -- as well as an additional \$261,667 to the California Department of Insurance and \$285,902 to the California Franchise Tax Board.

“It is important that we protect the victims of crime and this case shows how seriously we take the crime of elder abuse, whether that abuse is physical, mental, or financial,” said Riverside County District Attorney Mike Hestrin. “When a victim loses much or all of their life savings later in life, that loss can be devastating.”

Department of Insurance Commissioner Dave Jones said about this case: “Thanks to the joint efforts of the Department of Insurance and the Riverside County District Attorney’s Office, this former insurance agent has been brought to justice and will no longer be able to prey on innocent seniors.”

On June 5, 2015, Slawinski entered into a plea agreement with the Riverside County District Attorney’s Office, pleading guilty to six felonies: three counts of embezzlement from an elderly victim, two counts of burglary, and one count of tax evasion. The two burglary counts are strikes under the state’s Three Strikes Law. Although the counts he pled guilty to are not for all 13 victims, all 13 victims were included in the restitution.

Slawinski previously was a licensed life and health insurance agent. The Department of Insurance started an investigation in 2012 after receiving complaints about Slawinski’s business practices involving the sale and surrender of annuity products. The investigation ultimately revealed that Slawinski would have his victims sell him their legitimate annuities, telling them he would sell them better ones. The victims then would write Slawinski a personal check and, instead of investing their money into another annuity, Slawinski would deposit those checks into his personal bank account. He never purchased new annuities for the victims, nor did he ever refund the victims. Slawinski’s insurance license was revoked in June 2014.

The crimes happened over a period ranging from 2009 to 2013.

The case, RIF1402563, was prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Frank Donzanti and Deputy District Attorney Janet Hasegawa.

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