



BUTTE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY



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PRESS RELEASE

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Woman Sentenced For Stealing Thousands from Elderly Camp Fire Victim

A 31-year-old Oklahoma woman was sentenced to felony probation with a 120-day suspended sentence this afternoon for embezzling over \$63,000 of Camp Fire insurance money from an elderly Camp Fire victim, who had raised the woman from the age of eleven.

Brenda Rose Asbury, 31, of Oklahoma, appeared before Butte County Superior Court Judge Michael Deems today after her previously entered plea of no contest to grand theft from the 75-year-old woman she called her adoptive mother. Despite the District Attorney and Probation Department's request that Asbury be imprisoned for 120 days in county jail as part of a formal probation, the judge felt that Asbury's previously served 17 days in jail awaiting her plea, her clean record, and desire to pay back the money to the victim deserved no further jail time.

District Attorney Mike Ramsey noted the 75-year-old Camp Fire victim had received insurance payments totaling over \$127,000 for the loss of her Paradise home in the November 2018 fire. After relocating to Lake County due to the Camp Fire, the victim had taken the defendant, **Brenda Rose Asbury**, 31, of Oklahoma, into her new residence to help the defendant escape a bad relationship in Oklahoma. The victim had paid travel costs so that the defendant, whom she called her "daughter", could make it to California.

Ramsey said Asbury convinced the victim to put Asbury's name on the bank account containing the victim's insurance settlement to "protect it" from any attempt by the state to recoup money used for the care of the victim's dying husband. Still distressed from the Camp Fire, the victim agreed to Asbury's plan and put Asbury on the account, in name only, so that nothing would happen to the money, which was supposed to help the victim rebuild her life.

Ramsey said at no point was Asbury given permission to use any of the money in the account. However, Asbury drained \$63,100 from the account and fled back to Oklahoma.

At sentencing, Deputy District Attorney Dong-Jin Lee noted that "disasters can bring out the best in people, and the worst," and Asbury unfortunately chose to commit the "most despicable of crimes", by taking advantage of the person who had raised her and treated her like a daughter.

Judge Deems placed Asbury on felony probation with the conditions that she participate in a job training program, work full time, or submit proof of 10 job searches a week so she could begin paying back the \$63,100 that was embezzled.

