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**Contact** Kylie Mason

**Phone** 850-245-0150



## **Florida Attorney General's Office News Release**

### **Man Convicted of Exploiting Elderly Victim Sentenced to 25 Years in Prison**

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody's Office of Statewide Prosecution secured a 25-year prison sentence as a habitual felony offender for a man convicted of exploiting the elderly. The jury found Victor Hawkins guilty of stealing more than \$230,000 from a 77-year-old relative diagnosed with dementia. In addition to stealing cash, Hawkins also stole the victim's home and vacant lot and evicted the victim's wife from the home. Following the 25-year prison sentence, Hawkins will also face 10 years of probation.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "It is absolutely reprehensible that this man would exploit his own relative with dementia and steal hundreds of thousands of dollars. Now, thanks to the hard work of my statewide prosecutors, he will be held accountable. Protecting Florida's seniors is of the utmost importance to me, and we will relentlessly pursue those who aim to exploit seniors for their own personal gain."

The charges sprang from an arson investigation in Manatee County conducted by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives and the Florida Bureau of Fire and Arson Investigations.

Assistant Statewide Prosecutor George Bedell and former Assistant State Attorney Melissa Gould of the 10th Judicial Circuit handled the case.