



Genesee County Prosecutor's Office David Leyton, Prosecutor



Oakland County man accused of conning \$356,400 out of Argentine Township businessman

by Bryn Mickle | The Flint Journal
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FENTON, Michigan -- More than a year -- and \$356,400 -- later, an Argentine Township man is still waiting for his big payday.

Authorities say the local businessman thought he was making an investment to buy raw steel and sell it as a profit to a giant pharmaceutical company based in Tennessee.

Instead, authorities say the man was victimized by a serial con man who still hadn't paid back money he owed from a previous embezzlement conviction.

"He got taken," said Genesee County Prosecutor David S. Leyton.

The man apparently previously had done business with David J. Broecker, 51, of Orion Township.

Broecker reportedly claimed he had to pay cash for the steel and that the plan was to turn around and give to an unnamed machinist who would produce steel parts for a King Pharmaceuticals plant.

Without a signed contract in hand, the businessman allegedly wrote Broecker a \$10,000 check at a bank inside a Fenton grocery store.

That first check in April 2008 was followed soon by more checks and cash, police said.

The businessman apparently began to have second thoughts after four months of handing over money but kept the checks coming after Broecker agreed to some promissory notes.

The final straw came in January, when the investment still had not yielded any profits.

When the businessman tried to back out, however, Broecker allegedly told him the deal would lose \$250,000 a day if the steel parts weren't supplied.

Finally, in April, the businessman went to police for help.

Fenton police opened an investigation and discovered that Broecker had been convicted of embezzlement in Wayne County in 1999 for a kickback scheme in Dearborn.

In that case, Broecker stole \$129,000 from an industrial supply company by inflating commission on sales that had never taken place.

Two years later, Broecker was again convicted of embezzlement in Oakland County after he was caught in another bogus sales scheme involving stainless steel rollers that he claimed were for Ford.

In the latest case, police found that Broecker never had any contract with King Pharmaceuticals for any steel and that King didn't even list him as one of its vendors.

The company also told police that its steel purchases were a small fraction of the inflated figures that Broecker had allegedly boasted in selling the Argentine businessman on the deal.

It appears that the money Broecker reportedly took was never used to buy steel, said Fenton Detective Scott Townsend.

A spokesman for the Tennessee-based King Pharmaceuticals could not be reached for comment.

Investors need to be careful when they hand over money and should research both the investment and the person taking the cash, Leyton said.

"(The businessman) was approached with the ultimate free lunch," Leyton said. "There is no free lunch."

So far, no money has been recovered.

Broecker was arrested this month and is charged with obtaining more than \$20,000 under false pretenses.

The felony carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison and, in this case, a \$1 million fine.

Broecker could not be reached for comment, and court records indicate he has not retained an attorney.

He is free on a \$20,000 bond pending a preliminary hearing Wednesday.

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