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Office of the State Attorney
20th Judicial Circuit

Serving Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry and Lee

June 15, 2017

Estate Sale Fraud

Charlotte Braden, 66, of Fort Myers was found guilty of Scheming to Defraud and now faces up to 30 years in prison. The case started due to a 2012 incident where she was hired and contracted to perform an estate sale for a family, with the agreement that she would receive a commission of 30% of the proceeds from sale. Any remaining money from the sale was to be forwarded to the family after 30 days in order to allow time for all checks and credit card payments to be processed. In addition to household items and furniture included in the estate, there was approximately \$450,000 in fine jewelry and diamonds to be sold.

The estate sale was held on three consecutive days in November 2012 on Marco Island. At the end of the sale, Braden took the remaining items and advised the family that she could sell the items on consignment at her warehouse, donate them to charity, or have them returned to them. The family was also told that they would receive a detailed inventory within 30 days of the sale to assist in their decision.

After the 30 days, the family contacted Braden to obtain an update on the status of their estate sale. They were told additional time would be needed to complete it due to the large value of the estate. Over the next 2 months, the defendant did not provide any information including the items sold, items remaining, or the amount of money that was generated from the sale. Braden also refused to return the remaining property to the family.

Assistant State Attorney Jennifer Royal of our Economic Crime Unit handled the case. Sentencing is scheduled for August 7th. The jury came back with the guilty verdict Wednesday afternoon.

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