



## Rod Underhill, District Attorney

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### **Man sentenced to prison, ordered to repay \$23,000 for posing as a doctor, claiming to have dying child**

Today, Multnomah County District Attorney Rod Underhill announced that 36-year-old Michele Bocci appeared in Multnomah County Circuit Court and pleaded guilty to one count of aggravated theft in the first degree by deception.

Judge Kathleen M. Dailey ordered Bocci to spend one year in prison and pay \$23,000 in restitution.

During this investigation, detectives assigned to the Portland Police Bureau's White Collar Crimes Unit, learned that a woman gave Bocci a cashier's check for \$23,000 under the pretense that he would use the money to pay for chemotherapy, claiming his daughter was sick with leukemia.

"Michele Bocci was described as charming and very convincing," Multnomah County Deputy District Attorney Sam Leineweber, who prosecuted this case, said after sentencing. "Not only did he claim he had a very sick daughter, he presented himself as a doctor and as a single parent. He even lived his lie and would wear medical scrubs that he bought for less than \$30."

This investigation started in July 2017 when the victim reported to police that in approximately 2014, she was at a park in Portland, Oregon with her daughter. The two of them were speaking German. While at the park, a man, later identified as Bocci, initiated a conversation with the victim. He spoke fluent German. The two exchanged phone numbers but never spoke after meeting in the park.

According to information previously released by the Portland Police Bureau, Bocci called the victim in 2017 and said he needed to meet with her for an urgent matter.

"Michele Bocci then begged the victim for a quick loan to cover the medical expenses for his daughter who he claimed was dying," DDA Leineweber said. "He promised to pay her back after he received the \$1 million life insurance settlement he was expecting from his wife who he claimed had recently died."

During the investigation, law enforcement learned Bocci has never been married and there was no insurance policy.

Eventually, the victim and her attorney found media reports detailing other cases, both locally and internationally, of theft and deception involving the defendant.

PPB Detective Liz Cruthers determined that Bocci had spent the money on "lifestyle" items. Police confirmed none of the money was spent on medical expenses as Bocci claimed. To date, law enforcement has been unable to verify whether Bocci even has a daughter.

The Portland Police Bureau's White Collar Crimes Unit and the Multnomah County District Attorney's Office encourages everyone to carefully research any person and/or organization soliciting money. If you choose to loan money, consider getting a payment plan in writing. Keep records of interactions with the individuals/organizations for whom you give money. Never give out any personal identifying information without verifying what the information will be used for. Additionally, contacting a trusted family member or friend for assistance in determining whether or not to give a person or organization money can add an "extra set of eyes" on a situation and help you avoid becoming the victim of a scam.

If you believe that you have been victimized, contact your financial institutions and local law enforcement immediately.

#MCDA#

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