



PRESS RELEASE

Office of the United States Attorney
Western District of Wisconsin
(608) 264-5158
TTY (608) 264-5006
www.usdoj.gov/usao/wiw

For Immediate Release

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Contact Person

Dan Graber
Assistant U.S. Attorney

Madison, Wisconsin -- Stephen P. Sinnott, United States Attorney for the Western District of Wisconsin, announced that Philip Schuth, age 53, LaCrosse, WI pleaded guilty today in U.S. District Court in Madison to social security fraud. Schuth pleaded guilty to Count One of the indictment that charged that Schuth intentionally concealed the death of his mother, Edith Schuth, from the Social Security Administration by placing her in a chest freezer and freezing her corpse from August 15, 2000 to April 23, 2005. According to the indictment, as a result of Schuth's actions, the Social Security Administration continued to pay out Title II benefits to Edith Schuth. During the period from August 15, 2000 to April 23, 2005, the Social Security Administration overpaid approximately \$35,690.

During the plea hearing, the government proffered evidence that the LaCrosse County Sheriff's Office was called to Schuth's home at 1330 Bainbridge Street, Town of Campbell, County of LaCrosse, WI on 4-22-05 at 4:00 p.m. Schuth was holed up in his house and refused to exit the home. Schuth indicated that he had weapons and explosives in the home and would use them if the police attempted to breach the home. Standoff lasted 15 hours until 7:30 a.m. the next day.

During a 15-hour standoff, Schuth communicated with police negotiators. When

asked if others were in the home, Schuth stated that his mother was in the basement in a chest freezer. He indicated he did not want to leave the home because he feared being prosecuted for: (1) hiding the corpse of his mother; (2) possessing a sawed-off shotgun; and (3) possessing explosive devices.

At 7:30 a.m. Schuth surrendered peacefully to the police. He exited the home and was arrested. Officers obtained a search warrant for the home and found among other things, the following items:

1. A chest freezer in the basement containing the corpse of Edith Schuth;
2. Numerous knives, a bayonet, and two machetes;
3. a gas mask;
4. 16 loaded firearms, including: semi-automatic pistols, revolvers, assault rifles, shotguns, and a 12 gauge sawed-off shotgun with four rounds of 00 buck; and
5. hundreds of rounds of ammunition in various calibers, including armor piercing rounds.

Schuth was interviewed by Sgt. Kurt Papenfuss at the LaCrosse County Jail later that morning. When asked about his mother, Schuth explained that his mother, Edith, died on August 15, 2000. He found her dead in her bed that morning. He decided to put her in the freezer because he was afraid people would think that he committed elder abuse and had killed his mother. Schuth also indicated that he needed her social security benefits and calculated that when the benefits would no longer cover the

property taxes on the home, he would either have to rob a bank for money, or give himself a "12-gauge lobotomy." Schuth explained that the social security benefits got wire transferred into a joint bank account with him and his mother, and that he wrote out the checks to pay the bills and buy food.

Chief United States District Judge Barbara B. Crabb scheduled sentencing for July 19, 2006, at 1:00 p.m. The statutory maximum penalty for Count One is five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

The charges against Schuth are the result of an investigation conducted by the Social Security Administration -- Office of Investigations, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives, LaCrosse County Sheriff's Office, Dane County Sheriff's Office-Bomb Squad, Vernon County Sheriff's Department, LaCrosse Police Department, Onalaska Police Department, and the Campbell Police Department. Prosecution of this case has been assigned to Assistant U.S. Attorney Dan Graber from the U.S. Attorney's Office in Madison, Wisconsin.

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