



LEON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Walt McNeil, Sheriff

2825 Major James Morgan Way Tallahassee, FL 32304

www.leoncountysos.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Javonni Hampton

Date: April 15, 2026

Leon County Sheriff's Office Arrests Two in Elder Exploitation and Fraud Scheme

On Wednesday, April 15th, the Leon County Sheriff's Office Financial Crimes Unit arrested 66-year-old Karen Blackburn and 68-year-old James Blackburn in connection with an investigation into suspected exploitation of an elderly person.

The investigation was initiated in January after the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) submitted a report of suspected exploitation. Detectives coordinated with a DCF investigator and obtained supporting documentation, including bank records dated January 2022 through December 2025, tax records, and a written investigative report detailing the allegations.

During the course of the investigation, detectives reviewed financial records indicating approximately \$470,000 in withdrawals from the victim's Florida Retirement System (FRS) account over a three-year period. The Blackburns had access to the victim's FRS account. The victim was reported to have exhibited cognitive decline consistent with Alzheimer's disease beginning in 2023 and was noted to require assistance with care and daily affairs. Karen Blackburn volunteered to become a caregiver for the victim.

Detectives determined funds from the victim's account were transferred into a joint account associated with Karen Blackburn. Financial records further reflected the Blackburns utilized the funds for personal expenditures, including out-of-town trips, lavish hotels, gambling at multiple casinos, and dining at upscale restaurants.

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Karen Blackburn and James Blackburn were taken into custody and transported to the Leon County Detention Facility. Both individuals are charged with exploitation of an elderly person, organized scheme to defraud, grand theft, and fraudulent use of personal identification information.



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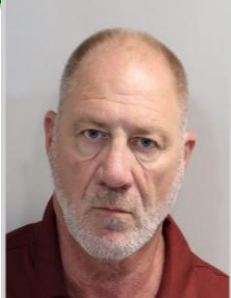
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Name: Karen Blackburn; James Blackburn

DOB: 12/31/59, 01/04/58

Charges: (1) EXPLOITATION OF AN ELDERLY PERSON (OVER \$50,000), (2) ORGANIZED SCHEME TO DEFRAUD (OVER \$150,000) (1) GRAND THEFT (OVER \$100,000) (1) FRAUDULENT USE OF PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION INFORMATION (OVER \$50,000)



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