



PRESS-REGISTER

Contractor charged with theft by deception

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Staff Reporter

A Mobile contractor accused of using Velcro to install inferior hurricane shutters -- in one case the shutters fell off the home before the contractor even left the driveway -- was charged with theft Monday, according to authorities.

Jerry T. McQuillan, 65, was charged with four counts of second-degree theft by deception. He was released from the Mobile County Metro Jail on a \$12,000 bond, the jail log showed.

McQuillan's arrest came after a four-month long interagency investigation involving the Mobile County Sheriff's Office, the District Attorney's Disaster Response Team and Fraud Strike Force and the Better Business Bureau, Mobile County District Attorney John Tyson Jr. said at a Wednesday news conference.

McQuillan is accused of stealing more than \$5,000 during at least four separate incidents with different homeowners in Mobile and Baldwin counties, Tyson said.

In one case, Tyson said, McQuillan took money from a homeowner and never returned, and in another he sold homeowners one brand of shutters but installed a cheaper brand.

In the other two cases, McQuillan installed hurricane shutters with 1-inch pieces of Velcro, Tyson said.

Authorities believe that there may be more victims, who did business with McQuillan Marketing Group, McQuillan Home Improvements or McQuillan Sales Company, Tyson said.

"This man probably has multiple victims," Tyson said. "Local homeowners in both Mobile and Baldwin counties and legitimate businesses he claims to represent."

In print advertisements, McQuillan used the logos of several companies that he did not represent. One of those was Florida-based Crystal Shutters, said Chris Gaddis, Crystal Shutters' president.

Gaddis and his company offered at the news conference to fix for free any of the shutters McQuillan may have installed under the Crystal Shutters name.

"He was not representing us," Gaddis said, "We're here to take care of it, even though we're not responsible."

Anyone who thinks they may have been a victim is asked to call the Better Business Bureau at 1-800-544-4714 or 1-800-824-5274.

Crystal Shutters can be reached at their Destin, Fla., office at 850-650-9634.

Under Alabama law, second-degree theft by deception is a Class C felony, punishable by up to 10 years in prison.

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