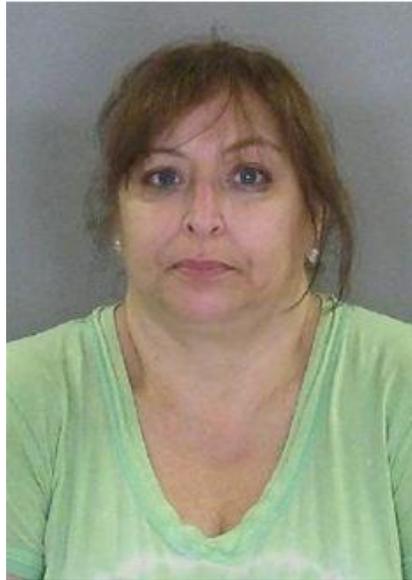




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Mother and Son Sentenced to State Prison for Stealing Multiple Vehicles



ALBANY, NY- District Attorney P. David Soares announced today that **RICHARD DEMATTEO**, 20, of Slingerlands, and **ELIZABETH LEONARDO**, 52, of Slingerlands have

both been sentenced to State Prison before the Honorable Peter A. Lynch in Albany County Court for their roles in the theft of two motor vehicles this morning.

RICHARD DEMATTEO was sentenced to 2 1/3 to 7 years in State Prison in addition to a concurrent State Prison term of 1 1/3 to 4 years. ELIZABETH LEONARDO was sentenced to 1 2/3 to 5 years in State Prison.

On June 18, 2013, DEMATTEO pleaded guilty to (1) Count of Criminal Possession of Stolen Property in the Third Degree, a Class D Felony, and (1) Count of Grand Larceny in the Fourth Degree, a Class E Felony.

On June 19, 2013 LEONARDO pleaded guilty to (1) Count of Criminal Possession of Stolen Property in the Third Degree, a Class D Felony.

On March 8, 2013, LEONARDO and DEMATTEO did unlawfully steal a 2013 Honda CRV, valued at \$25,379.33, from Rensselaer Auto Plaza by falsely representing themselves as individuals who were looking to test drive a vehicle.

Upon returning from the test drive, LEONARDO and DEMATTEO would switch keys and return to the car lot after hours and steal a vehicle which fit the key. The pair continued to maintain care, custody and control of said vehicle until April 17, 2013, driving it with a stolen dealer plate.

Between April 16 and 17, 2013, DEMATTEO did unlawfully steal a 2013 Hyundai Veloster Turbo, from Fuccillo Hyundai, valued at \$24,305.00. Once in possession of the vehicle, DEMATTEO did drive to a gas station in New Scotland on April 17, 2013 and put gas in the car and left without paying. At that time DEMATTEO was driving the vehicle with a dealer plate stolen from Orange Ford. An employee from Orange Ford went to the gas station to pay for the gas, and while in route he observed DEMATTEO driving the stolen vehicle. The employee followed the vehicle to the Shop Rite in Slingerlands. The employee then saw DEMATTEO remove the license plate and walk towards New Scotland.

DEMATTEO was also observed driving the Veloster at DePaula Chevrolet, in the City of Albany on April 17, 2013 with the stolen license plate. An employee from DePaula went to speak with DEMATTEO and retrieve the plate, at which time DEMATTEO sped away while the employee was clinging from the vehicle, causing minor injuries to the employee.

Additionally, on April 15, 2013 on 271 Route 9W in the Town of Bethlehem, DEMATTEO entered a business and did steal numerous boxes of copper coil from the store. The value of the copper coil was \$1,853.94 and the defendant's actions were caught on an in-store security camera.

DEMATTEO must make restitution for the stolen copper coil, gas, and both vehicles recovered. LEONARDO must pay joint restitution for the theft of the Honda CRV. Both guilty pleas are in full satisfaction of all outstanding charges regarding both defendants' arrest on April 17, 2013.

The investigation into the criminal activities of DEMATTEO and LEONARDO was conducted by members of the Bethlehem Police Department, the Albany Police Department, the Albany County Sheriff's Office and multiple law enforcement agencies from several surrounding counties.

"Both defendants in this case took advantage of their victims through deception and false pretenses. What makes the circumstances of this case particularly appalling is how they exploited the traditional practices of auto dealers for their own personal gain. What makes these circumstances more galling is the mother and son relationship. When it came to exercising good judgement, no one was home; and now no one will home at the Dematteo/Leonardo residence for several years. Ms. Leonardo not only stole a car, but helped her son steal a car as well. I believe the state prison sentences imposed will give both defendants the time they need to reflect upon the poor choices they made together," commented District Attorney Soares.

Bureau Chief of the Vehicular Crimes Unit Mary Tanner-Richter handled the prosecution of these cases.

For more information please contact Cecilia Logue (518) 275-4710.

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