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Legal document called into question at RASCO CEO Richard A. Short's preliminary examination

By Kristin Longley | Flint Journal

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FLINT, Michigan -- Witnesses testified today that they never signed the document that appeared to give Richard A. Short power of attorney over his elderly neighbor -- even though their signatures were on the paper.

Short, 57, is accused of stealing thousands of dollars from the neighbor, an 86-year-old woman with dementia.

He is charged with 24 counts of felony fraud, including embezzlement and fraudulently using a bank card.

Today marks the second day in Short's preliminary examination, after which Judge Christopher Odette is expected to determine whether Short will stand trial in the fraud case.

Short, a convicted embezzler, garnered statewide attention in March after his company, RASCO, landed a \$9.1 million tax credit from the state. The tax credit was rescinded after state officials became aware Short was out on parole after serving time for an embezzlement conviction.

Short later was charged in connection with his elderly neighbor, who lived near the Flint Township mobile home where Short was staying.

Much of today's testimony in the fraud case revolved around a document dated Sept. 16, 2009, that appeared to give Short power of attorney over the neighbor.

The signature of Marlene Stone, a former deputy clerk for the city of Flushing, appears on the document with a notary stamp.

But Stone testified that she retired from the city in 2008 and didn't witness or notarize documents after that. She said it looked like her signature, but wasn't authentic.

"I believe it to be a copy of my signature," she said.

The signature of the neighbor's husband also appears on the document. He testified today that he did not recall ever signing such a document.

The preliminary examination was still in process this afternoon.

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