

## Longmont police: Nurse stole \$100K from elderly man, contaminated house with meth

By John Bear *Staff Writer* Posted: 02/08/2016 08:35:57 PM MST | Updated: about a month ago

Shela Wagner (*Boulder County Sheriff's Office*) A registered nurse faces three felony charges after Longmont police allege she stole \$140,000 from an elderly man she was caretaker for and used enough methamphetamine inside his home that it was later condemned. Shela Wagner was arrested Friday on suspicion of theft from an at-risk person and criminal exploitation, both Class 3 felonies. She also faces charges of criminal negligence resulting in bodily injury and misdemeanor caretaker neglect, according to a police report. Detective Stephen Desmond said that Wagner, 53, lived with the 89-year-old man — who she was charged with providing 24-hour care for — for about 10 months and drained his bank account of more than \$100,000, and took \$40,000 in other property. "None of the money was for his benefit," Desmond said. "If you use money, or are a fiduciary agent or have power of attorney — whether you are acting that way or it's official — all the money has to directly benefit who it belongs to." Desmond said that people who know the elderly man told police that Wagner had isolated him from other people before committing the alleged thefts. Signs of financial exploitation of elders • Unpaid bills, eviction notices or notices to discontinue utilities • Bank account withdrawals the elder cannot explain and unusual activity on bank accounts. • Bank statements and canceled checks no longer come to elder's home • New "best friends" come into elder's life when they were previously unknown to the elder, caregiver or family member. • Legal documents that the elder doesn't understand or remember signing. • The care of the elder is not commensurate with the size of the estate • A caregiver expresses an excessive amount of interest in the amount of money being spent on the elder. • Belongings or property are missing. • Noticeably recent purchases or gifts are present. • Suspicious signatures on checks or documents. • Absence of documentation about financial arrangements. • Implausible explanations about elder's finances. • The elder is unaware or does not understand financial arrangements that have been made for him or her. • Change in bank or other financial institutions. • Increased or unusual activity on credit cards. • Withdrawals from savings or CDs despite penalties. • Changes in beneficiaries. • New authorized signers on accounts. • Change in financial planning documents like wills, especially when they benefit new or much younger "friend." • Changes in property titles, quick claim deeds or a new or refinanced mortgage. • Changes in attorney, stockbroker, doctor or other professional. *Source: Longmont police*

"That's a typical sign," Desmond said. "Isolation is a key red flag that law enforcement and social workers look for. That can be very telling toward future financial abuse." Desmond said the alleged victim has been removed from the home — which is now condemned because of methamphetamine contamination — and is living in an assisted care facility, where he has improved physically. "He has gained a lot of weight since he has been in better care," Desmond said. He said witnesses told police that Wagner, while apparently hallucinating from prolonged methamphetamine use, picked at the man's skin while looking for nonexistent worms, which contributed to an infection that nearly killed him. The home where the man lived, which might be a total loss, tested 105 times the acceptable limit for methamphetamine contamination, and witnesses told police that alleged victim's living conditions were "filthy," Desmond said. Desmond added that Wagner is accused of not bringing the man his medication and leaving him with other people when she was supposed to be providing 24-hour-a-day care. According to the Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies, Wagner has an active nursing license, and Desmond said police are working with the department to have her license revoked. Wagner also has an open misdemeanor child abuse case pending in Boulder County Court. She remained in custody at Boulder County Jail on Monday on a \$100,000 bond. She is expected to be formally charged Wednesday. *John Bear: 303-684-5212, [bearj@timescall.com](mailto:bearj@timescall.com) or [twitter.com/johnbearwithme](https://twitter.com/johnbearwithme)*