



# NEWS RELEASE

From New York State Workers' Compensation Fraud Inspector General  
**Catherine Leahy Scott**

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## **BUFFALO MAN SENTENCED FOR STEALING DECEASED WOMAN'S WORKERS' COMPENSATION BENEFITS**

BUFFALO – New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott announced the sentencing of a City of Buffalo man responsible for stealing more than \$3,500 in Workers' Compensation benefits meant for the woman he previously lived with and cared for but who had actually passed away two years earlier.

Michael Barton, 58, of Ada Place, Buffalo, was sentenced in Buffalo City Court Monday afternoon to three years of probation for his prior guilty plea to Petit Larceny. At the court appearance, Barton agreed to a judgment for \$3,529.11 in restitution.

An investigation by Inspector General Leahy Scott found that Barton regularly cashed Workers' Compensation benefit checks belonging to the woman he cared for and who passed away in July 2012. Nonetheless, Barton continued cashing her checks through September of 2014 as if she were still alive. Worker's Compensation benefits are meant to cease upon the death of a recipient.

“This morbid fraud and abuse of a deceased individual's accounts enriched the defendant with financial benefits to which he was not entitled,” said **Inspector General Leahy Scott**. “I will continue to use my office to protect benefits meant to assist honest, hard-working New Yorkers.”

Inspector General Leahy Scott thanked the New York State Police for their assistance with the arrest, and Erie County District Attorney John J. Flynn and his office for prosecuting this matter.

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*The New York State Office of the Workers' Compensation Fraud Inspector General investigates fraud, abuse and/or illegal acts against the New York State Workers' Compensation system, including fraud by medical service providers, employers seeking to evade appropriate Workers' Compensation charges, and employees who fabricate injuries to fraudulently receive system benefits. Complaints and referrals are kept confidential. We can be reached by calling toll free: 1-800-367-4448, utilizing our online complaint form at <http://www.ig.ny.gov> or sending an email to: [inspector.general@ig.ny.gov](mailto:inspector.general@ig.ny.gov). You also can write to our office at: Office of the Workers' Compensation Fraud Inspector General, Empire State Plaza, Agency Building 2, 16th Floor, Albany, New York 12223*