

NEWS

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Shrewsbury Man Sentenced to 21 Months in Prison for Defrauding the Social Security Administration

(More)

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TRENTON – A Shrewsbury man was sentenced to 21 months in federal prison today to for defrauding the Social Security Administration of \$384,980 in disability benefits, Acting U.S. Attorney Ralph J. Marra, Jr., announced.

U.S. District Judge Anne E. Thompson also ordered Douglas Eugene Fittinger, 63, a/k/a “David Fittinger,” to pay \$384,980 in restitution to the Social Security Administration (“SSA”).

On August 1, Fittinger pleaded guilty before Judge Thompson to one-count of Social Security disability fraud.

At his plea hearing, Fittinger admitted that between June 1989 and April 2007, he collected disability benefits from the Social Security Administration, using his real name and social security number, on the basis of alleged physical and mental disabilities. Fittinger also admitted that between October 1993 and April 2007, he held a Merchant Marine officer’s license and to do so, was required to pass physical examinations. Fittinger admitted that the results of these physicals were inconsistent with his claimed disability.

Furthermore, Fittinger admitted that during the period of time that he was claiming disability benefits, he also had an alternate social security number using the name “David Fittinger.” Fittinger admitted that he worked, and collected worker’s compensation benefits, using the alternate social security number while he was collecting SSA disability benefits.

In determining the sentence, Judge Thompson consulted the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges that take into account the severity and characteristics of the offense, the defendant’s criminal history, if any, and other factors. The judge, however, was not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

Parole has been abolished in the federal system. Defendants who are given custodial terms must serve nearly all that time.

Marra credited Special Agents of the Social Security Administration-OIG with investigation of the case.

The government is represented by Assistant United States Attorney Eric M. Schweiker of the U.S. Attorney’s Office Criminal Division in Trenton.

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Defense Attorney: Michael Chazen, Esq. Freehold