

STATEMENT OF WILLIAM BLEVINS

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, I am Bill Blevins from Prince William County, Virginia. I am pleased to represent my cousin, 72 year old Vaughan Blevins of Fairfax County, Virginia and over 200 others who have been exploited financially by a career conman – Larry C. Henderson. At present I am the legal guardian/conservator for Vaughan Blevins.

On November 12, 1997 I was notified through the Manassas Park Police Department that Vaughan had been found lost and confused adjacent to their headquarters building. He was also very hungry, had only \$3.00 in his wallet along with instructions to contact Larry Henderson in case of emergency. Larry was notified and came to pick him up. The Officers on duty were suspicious and contacted Vaughan's insurance agent whose card was fortunately also in his wallet. This led to me being called.

When I confronted Larry about his financial dealings with Vaughan, he denied everything. When Larry denied knowing anything about any previous dealings, Vaughan threw up his arms and charged Larry, not unlike a caged animal turned loose, and began shouting "YOU KNOW LARRY, YOU KNOW".

After that, I took Vaughan to stay with me at my Mother's home in Fairfax, County. I also notified Adult Protective Services of Fairfax County. In the next few days the following became evident:

- Vaughan had only \$14.21 in the bank, with the account being emptied out monthly as soon as Vaughan's pension was automatically deposited.
- There were numerous outstanding loans using Vaughan's property as collateral.
- Vaughan was checked out medically and found to be severely malnourished, lacked necessary medical supervision for at least 2 years, suffering from dementia and mental abuse.
- Adult Protective Services made me aware that Larry was being investigated by Fairfax County C.I.D. regarding another victim with dementia and had a history of seeking out that type of victim.

I interviewed with Fairfax County C.I.D. and was told it would take about 60 days to formulate a case. I was told Vaughan made a poor witness because of his dementia. I was reminded that Larry Henderson had certain rights, including the right to face his accuser. My response was the Constitution's guarantee of equal rights and protection for everyone – Let a Judge and Jury decide. I was reminded more than once that it wasn't a crime for someone to "give their money away". I found, and still find, this comment unsuitable and demeaning to a victim with diminished capacity.

I asked around and I heard of more past and present victims of Larry Henderson in Fairfax County and other jurisdictions. When notified, the Fairfax County Police Department seemed disinterested

I was astonished to learn that Larry Henderson had a civil and criminal track record unrivaled by few, if any. I contacted as many "victims" as possible. All were very helpful. Nearly all were

elderly. They in turn knew of others who had “bad experiences” with Larry H. I asked many why they hadn’t gone to the police. Some had, with few results. Some victims were 2nd generation. It was obvious Larry H. sought out a certain victim profile –

- Elderly, preferably a widow or widower,
- Diminished capacity,
- Rural and/or older communities,
- Recent obituary listing,
- Small social group with other elderly persons,
- Older residences in need of some repair or maintenance, and
- Some religious interest.

To accommodate these profiles, Larry H. would often portray himself as –

- A former friend or business associate of a recently deceased loved one,
- A preacher or minister
- A contractor down on his luck.
- A nice guy, often buying a round of coffee.

Larry began exploiting Vaughan as early as 1991, as well as each year thereafter, cleaning out nearly his entire bank account. Bonds cashed, existing bank accounts emptied, subsequent earnings and money from unknown sources were laundered through Vaughan’s account(s) approaching \$600,000+-.

Larry H. developed a certain “hold” over Vaughan. Vaughan was conditioned to think he had to ask for permission to eat, go somewhere, use the bathroom and perform simple, everyday tasks. In the 6 weeks it took to get him deprogrammed and get his house habitable again, it was always “ask Larry”, “where’s Larry”, “what will Larry say”, etc. During the 6 weeks of deprogramming sessions, Vaughan would sometimes, especially at night, want to talk. He would ask “why Larry did that to him”, “what’s going to happen to me” and “am I going to die”. Sometimes, as reality set in, he would cry or sob and blame himself for allowing things to occur as they did.

Larry H. did not confine himself to the extreme Northern Virginia area. He has a history in approximately the upper ¼ of the State of Virginia, particularly Fairfax, Prince William, Arlington, Fauquier, Loudoun, Clarke, Frederick and Warren counties as well as the independent cities and towns. He has a history in Eastern West Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey and southern New York as well as Louisiana. I was told that he once took approximately 8-10 widows/widowers for about \$100,000. All their names appeared on Larry H.’s previous bankruptcy filings.

Larry H. also did a small amount of work for the homeowners association president in the affluent Mantua Subdivision in Fairfax County. He then gave her name as a reference and scammed several other homeowners in that community. She served as a prop for his schemes. He had to refund one and was convicted on another in a different jurisdiction, as that was where the money changed hands. That jurisdiction is the City of Manassas Park, Virginia. If not for their effort and the diligence of Investigator Tony DeFelice, Larry H. would probably not be in jail

today. Investigator DeFelice, who is sitting behind me today ---was who I called when I discovered Larry H. had a 186-day-old felony warrant in Fairfax County and he had it served on him. This is the only conviction in Fairfax County and they sat on it for over 6 months.

Investigator DeFelice was instrumental in getting Prince William County to prosecute two other cases against Larry H. Unfortunately, Fairfax County could have added at least one year to Larry H.'s Virginia prison term. Despite the presence of 5 representatives from other jurisdictions, they dropped charges on a felony. In short, in the overall scheme of things, Fairfax County has been very kind to Mr. Henderson, for whatever reason.

I am told Larry H. will be out of Virginia State Penitentiary next March 2003, having served 3 years of a 6-year sentence. He then will begin serving his 8-year Federal sentence.

Looking back it has been very frustrating getting assistance and the proper representation for Vaughan Blevins, whom I might add, is a Veteran and former civil servant himself.

I would recommend the following to Congress:

- Federal statute to protect people with diminished capacity,
- National registry for those who victimize people with diminished capacity,
- Mandatory statutes to make banks and lending institutions report suspicious activity and/or suspicious loan applications and
- Strict guidelines governing loan applications.

What will be the result of the May 20, 2002 hearing?

Others and I have been forced to settle with disappointment the last 5 years. Will this be another disappointment?

I anxiously await the results.