

<https://www.tampabay28.com/news/local-news/i-team-investigates/the-price-of-protection/former-professional-guardian-traci-hudson-sentenced-to-8-5-years-in-prison-for-theft-exploitation>

Former professional guardian Traci Hudson sentenced to 8.5 years in prison for theft, exploitation

Hudson pleaded guilty to 19 felony counts

A former professional guardian appointed by the court to care for elderly people under her care pleaded guilty to felony charges in Pinellas County court this afternoon. The ABC Action News I-Team has been covering the case for over three years and was in the courtroom today when the plea happened. Traci Hudson will spend 8.5 years in prison and then will spend 20 years on probation.





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CLEARWATER, Fla. — A former professional guardian appointed by the court to care for elderly people under her care pleaded guilty to felony charges in Pinellas County court this afternoon.

The ABC Action News I-Team has been covering the case for over three years and was in the courtroom today when the plea happened.

Traci Hudson will spend 8.5 years in prison and then will spend 20 years on probation.

She will also be responsible for paying more than \$575,000 in restitution to her victims after changing her plea from “not guilty” to “guilty” on all counts in Pinellas County Circuit Court Judge Susan St. John’s courtroom.

At the conclusion of the hearing, Hudson was fingerprinted, handcuffed and escorted by deputies to the Pinellas County Jail, where she will await transportation to a state prison to begin serving her sentence.

Under state law, she must serve at least 85 percent of her sentence before being released.

Plea comes 3 ½ years after arrest

Hudson was first arrested in November 2019 after records showed she took more than half a million dollars from a 92-year-old man under her care.

Hudson was appointed by the court to manage the finances, health care and other life decisions for at least 45 elderly adults who had been declared “incapacitated” by judges.

After her initial arrest, her guardianship cases were audited, resulting in 18 more felony counts, including exploitation, grand theft and perjury.

The prosecutor said in a memo that Hudson could have faced up to 135 years in prison if convicted on all counts.

Hudson is the former president of the [Guardianship Association of Pinellas County](#).

[A 77-page report](#) from the Pinellas County Inspector General released last year alleged she often billed wards for working more than 24 hours in a day, paid realtors up to 18 percent commissions from the sale of her ward's properties, altered inventories, and had tens of thousands of dollars worth of her wards' belongings come up missing.

[Hudson failed to show up](#) for a court hearing to face her most recent charges in April.

A Pinellas Park Police report says her daughter grew concerned and asked for a welfare check at a Marriott hotel, which was Hudson's last known location.

Hudson was found there "on the floor unresponsive."

According to the report, "there was a substantial likelihood that Hudson attempted to commit suicide" and that Hudson met Baker Act criteria and was hospitalized.

In court Monday, Hudson admitted to stealing money, guns and jewelry from elderly victims under her care.

Some of Hudson's victims' family members and guardianship reform advocates attended Monday's sentencing hearing.

"We have so many victims that have been taken by Traci Samuel Hudson that, as we speak, not getting justice," said guardianship reform advocate Hillary Hogue, who reported Hudson multiple times to the state Office of Public and Professional Guardians.

That's the watchdog agency set up by the state to ensure professional guardians comply with state law.

Lesia Martino was also at the hearing.

She lost her home after losing a libel/slander lawsuit filed by Hudson in 2018, the year before Hudson's arrest.

Martino alleged Hudson didn't provide adequate care to her father, Roland Martino.

"I think she's, like in her mind, like she didn't do anything wrong. She blames the system," Martino said.

"She just pled guilty to every charge that was put to her. That is the biggest and strongest way you can take accountability for anything in this country," said Hudson's attorney Richard McKyton.

Another Florida professional guardian is scheduled to enter into a plea deal in Hillsborough County court later this month.

Rebecca Fierle was also arrested in 2019 following the death of a man under her care.

Her first trial last year ended in a hung jury.

Hudson will be 83 years old when she finishes her prison sentence and probation.

If you have a story you'd like the I-Team to investigate, email us at adam@abcactionnews.com