



Stratton fraudster who stole £33,000 from dying uncle must pay it all back
Swindon Crown Court

A former school governor jailed for plundering the bank account of his dying elderly uncle must repay what he took, and Paul Ross will no longer benefit from his portion of the 90-year-old's will because of his splashing the cash on luxury living while he was still alive. At a Proceeds of Crime Act hearing a judge was told that he benefitted from his crime – which got him two years and four months in jail – by £33,082.72p. He has already repaid just over £29k leaving £3,817 outstanding, which he must hand over to be returned to the deceased's estate within 28 days. But the court heard that as the 60-year-old builder is still technically a beneficiary from the will, the order will not be complete until it is settled, and to avoid any risk of the authorities claiming he has not complied with the confiscation order the court was told he will forgo his share. Judge Jason Taylor QC, sitting at Swindon Crown Court, made the order saying if the payment is not made in full then eight months will be added to his sentence. Ross was only caught when his victim died, and the rest of his family were suspicious as to why there was so little left in his estate. Edgar King, known as Ted, and his wife Dot moved into a Swindon care home in 2015. Soon after his wife died, aged 99, and because of Ted's mobility issues the defendant, who lived nearby, was granted power of attorney over his finances. Almost immediately the father-of-three started to help himself to the contents of the old man's bank account. Between November 15, 2015 and August 25, 2016, he made £33,082p of unauthorised withdrawals. His siblings' families had looked after the elderly couple before they moved to Swindon and were aware of how frugal they were with money. After Ted died in 2016 they were surprised at how little was left and after getting hold of bank statements noticed a string of odd payments. As well as withdrawals after his death there were others for meals out, clothes shops and even one at Gatwick airport when Ross was taking his family on holiday. "When one goes to Paul Ross' bank account one can see spending on what one would call luxuries: clearly paid for out of money from Ted King's bank account," Hannah Squire told the sentencing hearing. Ross, of Retingham Way, Stratton, initially pleaded not guilty to fraud but changed it on the day of trial.

Chris Oswald, defending, said his client had no previous convictions and was full of remorse for what he had done, paying back most of it. He has a building company directly employing three, and 10 subcontractors, and his wife runs a child-minding business.

Swindon Advertiser 20th August 2018