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FEATURED

TOP STORY

Convicted Elkton-based contractor facing new charge in Delaware

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Slagle

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ST. GEORGE'S, Del. — An Elkton-based general contractor who is still on probation relating to a

2019 Cecil County criminal case in which he bilked two clients out of thousands of dollars is back in legal trouble — this time in Delaware, where he has been charged with home improvement fraud, according to the New Castle (Del.) County Police Department.

The investigation leading to the latest criminal case against the suspect — Elkton-area resident Gary Slagle II, 44 — started at approximately 9:50 a.m. on June 18, when New Castle County Division of Police officers were dispatched to the 900 block of Melissa Court in the Highpointe community in St. Georges for a home-improvement-fraud complaint, police reported.

A 57-year-old woman who lives at that address told investigators that she had paid the contractor money to perform renovations on her home approximately one year ago and that, although Slagle started the agreed-upon work, he did not complete it, police said.

The alleged victim provided officers with a copy of the contract she had with Slagle, who, based on that paperwork, was operating under the business name of TriPoint Restorations, and it had been signed on June 22, 2021, police added.

“This contract stated an outline of the work to be completed, monetary values to be paid for said agreed-upon work, and the timeline and expectations of payment and completion. The contract total was over \$50,000 and the project was due to start August 2021 and end by October 2021,” a NCCPD spokesperson outlined.

In addition, the alleged victim provided officers with copies of three checks totaling \$40,000 that she had given to Slagle, police reported.

Moreover, the alleged victim showed a Jan. 19, 2022 text message that she had received from Slagle, who indicated that the “project would be done in 30 days,” which, had it been carried out, still would have been four months later than the agreed-upon completion date, police said.

Then, in May, with the home improvement still not completed, the alleged victim texted Slagle — asking for an updated work schedule — and he did not respond, police added.

Based on the information gathered, the officers obtained an arrest warrant for Slagle, who, in turn, surrendered himself at the NCCPD headquarters on Thursday, according to police. Slagle is charged with one count of home improvement fraud of \$1,500 or greater, police reported.

After his Delaware arraignment, Slagle was released on his personal recognizance, police noted.

(Cecil County District Court records indicate that, after Delaware authorities obtained the arrest warrant, Slagle was charged with fugitive from justice in Cecil County in connection with that case and that he was taken into custody on June 18. Those records further show that Slagle was held in the Cecil County Detention Center on no bond for three days, until he posted a \$5,000 bond on June 21 to gain his release.)

Based on the investigation, NCCPD officers determined that Slagle has also done business in Maryland and Pennsylvania, according to police.

“The Division is concerned that there may be additional victims who have not yet come forward,” the spokesperson commented.

NCCPD officials are asking anyone with any information pertaining to this investigation to contact S/Cpl. L. Lucas by sending an email to at leigh.lucas@newcastlede.gov or by calling the New Castle County Division of Police non-emergency number at 302-573-2800.

Citizens can text a tip anonymously simply by texting the number 847411 keyword: NCCDE. In addition, a resident can submit a tip via the agency’s website at <http://www.nccpd.com>. Tipsters also may call Crime Stoppers at (800) TIP-3333 or visit on Facebook (IM) at New Castle County Division of Police.

Slagle’s Cecil County conviction

Should Slagle be convicted in this Delaware legal matter, it likely will result in a violation-of-probation charge against him in the adjudicated 2019 Cecil County criminal case. (That criminal

case against Slagle originated in Cecil County District Court in 2017, and it entered Cecil County Circuit Court in February 2019, when a Cecil County grand jury indicated Slagle.)

In October 2020, Cecil County Circuit Court Judge William W. Davis Jr. imposed a one-year sentence on Slagle — which he then suspended — after Slagle pleaded guilty to failure to comply with the Custom Home Protection Act, which is a misdemeanor, as part of a binding plea agreement, according to court records and Cecil Whig archives.

The judge also ordered Slagle to serve five years of supervised probation, which remains in effect today.

In addition, Davis ordered Slagle to pay the entire \$100,000 in restitution to his victims — Elkton-area residents William Baker, then 65, and Stanley Kegley, then 72 — within the five-year period of his supervised probation. More specifically, the judge ordered Slagle to pay at least \$1,000 a month while on probation.

From the bench during that October 2020 courtroom hearing, Davis cautioned Slagle that, at some point, he would have to pay more than the minimum \$1,000 a month in restitution to fully meet his probation requirement.

“Obviously, making the monthly (minimum) payment, you will be short forty grand at the end of the five years, which would be in violation of probation,” Davis told Slagle, who was seated at the defense table.

In that 2019 criminal case, Slagle stood accused of improperly handling money paid to him by customers during two different Cecil County home construction projects.

According to a statement of fact presented by Cecil County State’s Attorney’s Office prosecutors, Slagle had entered into a \$357,000 contract with Doris Shepard — now deceased — and Baker in June 2014 to build a custom home in the 100 block of Plum Creek, which is off Oldfield Point Road, southwest of Elkton. The property is a short distance from the Elk River.

(Shepard was a friend of the Baker family, and they were buying the custom house together. Baker, at that time, was listed as the late Shepard's personal representative.)

The purchasing party made requested payments to Slagle during the project, prosecutors reported.

However, according to the SAO's statement of fact, Slagle deposited those payments into a bank account designated for his building company — Generation Construction, Inc. — instead of putting that money into an escrow account.

Slagle later took that money out of the company's bank account, prosecutors reported.

"The money was withdrawn for purposes not permitted by law," according to the prosecution's statement of fact, which did not specify the "purposes" and how they violated the law.

The judge outlined that \$50,000 of the total restitution to be paid by Slagle by September 2024 will go to Baker, while the other half will go to Kegley.

A similar alleged mismanagement of payments occurred after Kegley and his wife had contracted Slagle in June 2014 to build their custom rancher on the couple's property on Gilpin Avenue in Elkton, prosecutors reported.

Although the count to which Slagle pleaded guilty relates only to Baker, the binding plea deal included Kegley as a second victim as it applies to restitution, prosecutors explained.
