

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Carer stole £289,000 from 102-year-old woman



Edith Negus is thought to have had little to eat in the last week of her life

A “merciless” charity worker stole nearly £300,000 from a 102-year-old woman who lived in decrepit conditions while her carer bought houses which she later claimed were gifts.

Julie Sayles, a churchgoer, wrote herself into the will of Edith Negus when the woman’s mental and physical health deteriorated after her 101st birthday. Yesterday Sayles, 59, was jailed for nine years after being found guilty at Hull crown court of six charges, including fraud by abuse of position. She had spent Ms Negus’s savings on helping to buy properties in Trowbridge, Wiltshire, and Scarborough. She also considered buying a villa in Spain.

Ms Negus, who had no children, lived among mouse droppings and wore second hand clothes, is thought to have had little to eat during the last week of her life. She was described by her family as “caring, smiling and full of life” and had saved money and stockpiled tinned food fearing another war but Sayles secretly opened a joint bank account to drain her savings.

The carer lied to a solicitor claiming that the pensioner’s relatives were dead in order to get a new will written. When Ms Negus died in October 2014, relatives found that £289,000 was missing from her bank account. Family photographs had also disappeared with fur coats and Staffordshire pottery.

Sayles was arrested after a neighbour overheard her saying that she did not want family “crawling out of the woodwork”. Sayles had organised a funeral against the will of the family, at which she was seen laughing.

Sayles, from Bridlington, had told the jury that she loved Ms Negus, and torn up cheques before accepting the money and “thought it was faith that was guiding me”.

Sentencing Sayles yesterday, Recorder Anthony Kelbrick said that Ms Negus had grown up in a “different world” and had never realised that “she could and should have enjoyed some of the hard-earned savings during her life”.

He said that her family had put their trust in the carer only to be deceived by Sayles who had become aware of a “considerable fortune”.

“You coveted that wealth and set about acquiring it for yourself. You took advantage of her frailty time and time again. For a merciless fraudster like you the can be only one sentence: prison.”

Outside court, Ann Ruthven, Ms Negus great niece, said: “This is not how we think she should be remembered. She should be remembered for the long and full life she led and her wonderful smile.”

She added that the two-and-half year investigation had “taken a huge toll” on the family and that they still had many questions about the care of Ms Negus that they may “never get answers to” but she hoped lessons would be learnt from the case.

**If you would like a free initial consultation to discuss your situation and options open to you then contact me Chris Berry at:**

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