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Media Advisory

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Sentencing Thursday for Lawyer's Repeated Fraud

(Houston Texas) A punishment hearing is set for **Thursday (Aug. 28)** for former personal injury lawyer Steven Bearman, who has admitted stealing from a law firm that hired him as he awaited trial on an earlier charge of stealing from clients.

Bearman, 44, has pleaded guilty to misapplication of fiduciary duty involving over \$200,000. Prosecutor Lester Blizzard filed a punishment memorandum listing 46 victims with combined losses of \$1.6 million.

The first-degree felony makes him liable for penalties ranging from probation to 99 years in prison. The **hearing is scheduled for 8:30 a.m. in the 183rd District Court** of Judge Vanessa Velasquez.

Blizzard, chief of the DA's Major Fraud Division stated that Bearman took the clients' money from mid-2004 to late 2006 to support an extravagant life. Bearman told them their personal injury cases were still active. In fact, he had settled them and kept all or portions of the settlements.

"The defendant would listen to his clients' desperate stories about financial hardship and would still steal from them to support his high lifestyle," Blizzard's memorandum said.

Investigators charged Bearman in December 2006. His law license was suspended in March 2007. After his release from custody, the firm of Tassi Roth hired him in a paralegal/marketing position, and he began stealing from the firm's trust and operating accounts. Those thefts were used to pay child support and his legal bills, and repay some earlier victims, Blizzard said.

"The defendant has committed an offense which reaches at the heart of the justice system," Blizzard's memorandum concluded. "He has taken advantage of this court by continuing criminal conduct while he was on bond..." Blizzard's memorandum concludes.

(End)

