



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL HENRY McMASTER
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

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Pawleys Island Man Pleads Guilty To Insurance Fraud, Chop Shop Violations

Columbia, S.C. - Attorney General Henry McMaster announced today that Michael D. Craft, 60, of 32 Parkview Drive in Pawleys Island, pleaded guilty on October 20, 2005, to one (1) count of Making a False Statement or Representation, a misdemeanor violation of §38-55-540(2), and punishable to three (3) years imprisonment and/or a fine of \$50,000.

Craft also pleaded guilty to violating the state's Motor Vehicle Chop Shop Act, a felony (§56-29-30(C)(1)) punishable to five (5) years imprisonment and/or a fine of \$5,000 to \$10,000.

On or about July 18, 2002, Craft submitted a claim for property damage to Travelers Insurance Company following an alleged accident involving his 1995 Dodge Ram 3500. Craft claimed over \$3000 in damage to his truck. Investigation revealed that his claim was inflated over \$2000, and that he was trying to claim damage from a previous accident.

On or about February 21, 2003, the vehicle Craft was driving was inspected by SLED, at which time it was determined that the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) plate on the truck involved in the alleged accident was not the original. The VIN plate on his truck was from a vehicle that had previously been stolen from North Carolina.

Judge Steven John, presiding over the General Sessions Court of Horry County, sentenced Craft to two (2) years imprisonment, suspended to eighteen (18) months probation on each count. The sentences are to run concurrently.

The case was investigated by the State Law Enforcement Division, and prosecuted by the Attorney General's Office.

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