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DAVIE

'Gentleman Bandit' from Davie may have stolen more than hearts

A 'Gentleman Bandit' is accused of convincing two women to sell their New York homes and move in with him -- only to leave them empty-handed.

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BY DAVID SMILEY
DSMILEY@MIAMIHERALD.COM

Rose Marie Anglade thought she was building a life with the man of her dreams.

After meeting him during a visit to Florida, she sold her home in Queens, moved her family to Miramar and began planning a wedding.

She had no idea he was making the same plans with another woman -- at the same time.

Now, the 49-year-old mother of two has an empty

bank account, letters from collection agencies, no husband and lives in a home she knows could be taken from her tomorrow.

"Any day now I could be chased from my house," Anglade said Wednesday.

Anglade's hopes for redemption now lie with the Broward Circuit Court.

Her former fiancée, alleged 'Gentleman Bandit' Paul Francois, was arrested Wednesday and charged with two counts of grand theft and running an organized scheme to defraud.

Francois, according to his arrest warrant, swindled Anglade and at least one other New York woman, Sheila Brissault, out of nearly \$400,000 during the last two years. He promised to marry each woman if she sold her home and moved in with him in South Florida.

Investigators say Francois charmed both women into either giving him checks or creating joint bank accounts with him. Then he took off with all the money.

When they told him to return it, he threatened their lives and their families, according to his arrest affidavit.

For Brissault, the relationship resulted in a loss of more than \$100,000. She never sold her home and did move to South Florida, but she did give Francois the money to use to buy a home for them, according to the affidavit.

For Anglade, Francois' alleged scam stole not just the nearly \$300,000 she made when she sold her Astoria home, but her pride, freedom and possibly her shelter.

Now she buys her groceries with borrowed money or cash made from pawned jewelry and television sets.

"Everything I got I pawned them to go eat," she said Wednesday. "He didn't leave nothing for me."

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Francois' attorney, Leonard Fenn, said he had not seen the arrest affidavit but he questioned how his client could be charged with taking money from his own account.

Anglade said she met Francois in 2007 while she and her then-18-year-old daughter were vacationing in Florida. Anglade said she was buying a car at Francois' Miami-Dade dealership and she recognized him as a childhood acquaintance from Haiti.

The two began talking over a period of weeks and they later agreed to marry when Anglade moved to South Florida. So she put her Astoria, Queens home on the market.

It sold just a few months later for \$650,000.

Anglade said she made \$289,000 on the sale and moved most the money -- more than \$200,000 -- into a joint bank account.

The couple agreed to buy a Monarch Estates house in Miramar from Francois' brother, Gustave Francois, who was behind on his mortgage.

The deal: They would pay the money he owed on the property -- about \$20,000 -- and continue to pay the mortgage if he signed over the home through a Quit Claim deed.

But when Anglade cut a \$17,000 check for Francois to pay off the debt on the home in August 2007, he simply forged her signature on the reverse of the check and deposited the money into his personal account, according to court documents.

Anglade says she didn't learn that her home remained in foreclosure or that her money was gone until after she bounced a check in October when making home repairs.

Francois continued to live with her at the time.

BSO Detective John Calabro, of the Economic Crimes Unit, called the alleged crime unprecedented in that Anglade could actually end up homeless.

"This case is unique because it really shows the cold-heartedness of the individual involved," said Calabro. "I've never seen it happen that way. I've seen them steal their money but certainly not create a situation where the person is likely to become homeless and be out in the street."

Anglade filed a civil suit in Broward Courts in 2008, but the case stalled until she hired attorney Joe Pappacoda, a former Florida Department of Law Enforcement agent specializing in financial crimes.

Pappacoda said Anglade may have a good chance of having her money returned to her, now that Francois has been criminally charged.

Pappacoda now says both Francois brothers were in on the scheme, producing a copy of a cashed \$20,000 check made out to Gustave Francois.

Gustave Francois said Wednesday that he has nothing to do with his brother's alleged con game. He said he has hired an attorney to have Anglade evicted from the home and is also going after his brother.

"He is not my brother," he said. "He is my enemy."



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canes41 wrote on 08/13/2009 04:52:50 PM:

Actually, situations like this help even the scale for all the courts that steal from men by making them pay alimony. Why should a man pay money to support someone he is no longer married to? Let the b!tch get a job.

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rememberthefuture wrote on 08/13/2009 02:39:26 PM:

Replying to Johnjspear (08/13/2009 10:49:48 AM):
"My ex-girlfriend put it down on me that she was pregnant with my child and insisted that I pay for the abortion. Without going through all the details, I have been asking for the ultrasound ever since. She even lied about that to me. And you girls cry and claim fraud on this guy. Suck it up. You've...":

John, do you know how you can tell a woman is lying? Her lips are moving.

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rememberthefuture wrote on 08/13/2009 02:38:03 PM:

Women cheat hard working men out of their money every day through lies and deceit. So why is it news when a man rips off 2 women? Good for him!

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lucky011 wrote on 08/13/2009 12:43:36 PM:

Replying to Johnjspear (08/13/2009 10:49:48 AM):
"My ex-girlfriend put it down on me that she was pregnant with my child and insisted that I pay for the abortion. Without going through all the details, I have been asking for the ultrasound ever since. She even lied about that to me. And you girls cry and claim fraud on this guy. Suck it up. You've...":

I'm not saying that your ex didn't take you for a ride, but most people do not get an ultrasound before they make an appointment for an abortion. All it takes is a positive pregnancy test.

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trainer1 wrote on 08/13/2009 12:26:55 PM:

trainer1's comment is abusive and has been removed.

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joachim wrote on 08/13/2009 12:07:45 PM:

joachim's comment is abusive and has been removed.

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miaminative1970 wrote on 08/13/2009 10:58:31 AM:

Man, if they started charging women for this type of stuff, we'd need a new woman's jail to handle the overflow.

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