



For Immediate Release
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MADIGAN: SPRINGFIELD MAN CHARGED WITH DEFRAUDING ELDERLY WOMAN CLEANING UP AFTER TORNADO

Chicago – Attorney General Lisa Madigan today said a Springfield man was taken into custody after he allegedly collected more than \$500 from an elderly Jerome woman who hired him to clean gutters and power-wash her home in the wake of devastating tornadoes that struck the village and Springfield last Sunday night.

Family members contacted Madigan’s office and Jerome Police after learning that Thomas E. Melton, 37, of Springfield, allegedly drove the woman to her bank where she cashed a personal check for \$575 and then handed the money over to Melton for work that was never done.

“This is truly an example of how callous con artists can be,” Madigan said. “Thankfully, family members found out about the scam and the suspect was caught. I appreciate the cooperation of State’s Attorney John Schmidt’s office and the Jerome police.”

This afternoon, Madigan’s office obtained an arrest warrant from Sangamon County State’s Attorney John Schmidt’s office and Melton was taken into custody by Jerome Police and investigators in her office. Melton is charged with theft and financial exploitation of an elderly person, both Class 3 felonies, and aggravated home repair fraud, a Class 2 felony, and was taken to the Sangamon County Jail where he is being held on a \$50,000 bond.

Investigators for Madigan’s office have been assisting the village of Jerome and Sangamon County officials this week in guarding against home repair fraud and other schemes that commonly occur after natural disasters.

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