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Palliative care nurse admits he stole credit cards from dying patients

By Neary Ty • Reporter | 7:04pm Aug 3, 2018

Nurse stole from terminally ill patients



Nurse stole from terminally ill patients

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A palliative care nurse has admitted to stealing credit cards from dying patients and buying hundreds of dollars' worth of junk food and clothes.

Naol Benti, 27, was working at Mercy Place in Parkville, Melbourne, when he robbed Mary Purcell in December last year.

The registered nurse drained his victim's accounts, making almost daily purchases ranging from food at a local café and Domino's pizza, to more expensive items such as a diamond watch and camera bag from JB Hi-Fi.



Mary Purcell, 91, was one of Benti's elderly victims. Picture: 9NEWS (9NEWS)



Benti continues to work in the aged care industry. Picture: 9NEWS (9NEWS)

All up he spent more than \$350 in the first "shopping spree".

Mrs Purcell's daughters discovered the heartbreaking theft on the day the 91-year-old died, while cleaning out her room.



"This was the last thing that mum was going to do for us...like 'let's have lunch on mum,'" Anne Stubbings told 9NEWS.

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Naoi Benti pleaded guilty to 22 charges yesterday, including theft and deception. Picture: 9NEWS (9NEWS)

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Just a month later, Benti stole cash and another credit card from a second patient. Among his \$511 worth of purchases were ice cream, Viagra, petrol and a mobile phone recharge card.

On another occasion, a victim woke in the middle of the night to find Benti holding his \$1400 watch. When he asked the offender what he was doing, he replied he was "taking it to change the battery."

Yesterday Benti pleaded guilty to 22 charges, including theft and deception.

Outside court, Benti remained silent as he was asked questions of whether he had any remorse for his crimes.



Mrs Purcell's daughters discovered their mother had been robbed on the day she died. Picture: 9NEWS (9NEWS)

He moved from Ethiopia to Australia in 2010, with his lawyer telling the court his wife was pregnant and mentally ill in the time leading up to the offending.

Mercy Health said the incident involving a former staff member is extremely concerning, "there is no place in a caring organisation like ours for people who would exploit and breach the trust of elderly and vulnerable people."

Benti is still employed in aged care and will learn his fate on Monday.

"There should be something to prevent these people."

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