



# Department of Justice

**United States Attorney John W. Vaudreuil  
Western District of Wisconsin**

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## **CON MAN SENTENCED TO THREE YEARS IN PRISON**

Madison, Wis. - John W. Vaudreuil, United States Attorney for the Western District of Wisconsin, announced that Bernard C. Seidling, 62, Eau Claire, Wisconsin, was sentenced today to three years in federal prison without parole, and fined \$10,000, by Judge Barbara B. Crabb in United States District Court in Madison. Seidling was ordered to report to federal prison on May 21, 2013.

Seidling was found guilty of 50 counts of mail fraud by Judge Crabb on December 26, 2012. From 2003 through 2009, Seidling engaged in a fraud scheme in which he used the Wisconsin small claims court system to obtain small claims judgments against individuals and corporations based on false representations in lawsuits he filed.

In sentencing Seidling, Judge Crabb stated that the three-year sentence was warranted because Seidling had created so much trouble for so many people, with an enormous amount of vindictiveness. She believed that the judgments he obtained were ticking time bombs set to go off when an unwitting victim sold a house, changed jobs, etc. Judge Crabb also stated that the offenses were not an aberration, but, in her view, reflect a way of life Seidling has chosen.

Seidling filed suits in Wisconsin small claims courts against individuals and corporations in which he lied about their addresses and attempts to serve them. He submitted false documents to convince the small claims courts that he had process servers attempt to serve the defendants when, in fact, those attempts either had not been made, or, as Seidling knew, would be unsuccessful because he knew the defendants did not live at the addresses he had provided. In each of these lawsuits Seidling usually claimed the maximum allowed of \$5,000 (as of the time in the indictment), and he hid filings of the lawsuits from the victims of his scheme (the defendants in the lawsuits), and then obtained default judgments. Once he obtained these fraudulent default judgments, he filed them in the county where the victims actually lived or owned property, and also used them to attempt to file wage garnishments against the victims and the victims' property.



U.S. Attorney Vaudreuil stated that “Seidling earned this sentence with years of lies and fraud. He intended to cause a loss to the victims of over \$370,000 -- the total amount of the false judgments he obtained. Seidling remains a con man with no insight into his behavior.”

Vaudreuil also stated that this successful prosecution is the result of an investigation conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation; the United States Postal Inspection Service; the Sheriffs' Departments of Ashland, Barron, Bayfield, Burnett, Chippewa, Dane, Douglas, Dunn, Eau Claire, Iron, Jackson, Pierce, Polk, Sawyer, and Washburn counties; and the Wisconsin Department of Justice, Division of Criminal Investigation.

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