



BRIAN E. FROSH, MARYLAND ATTORNEY GENERAL

# PRESS RELEASE

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## Frederick County Man Pleads Guilty to Theft and Securities Violation after Defrauding Romantic Partners

**BALTIMORE, MD (July 8, 2022)** – Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh today announced that Joseph Carlini, 43, of Monrovia, pleaded guilty in the Circuit Court for Frederick County to theft and violation of a Securities Order in three cases involving his former romantic partners. Carlini was sentenced to 38 years in prison with all but 10 years suspended, followed by five years supervised probation upon release. Carlini was also ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$191,300.

“Joseph Carlini is a serial swindler who preyed upon romantic partners and lured them into investing in nonexistent enterprises,” said Attorney General Frosh. “I’m pleased my office was able to halt his illegal activity and keep him from duping additional victims.”

In November of 2018, Carlini represented to a new romantic partner and her parents that his name was Joe Cantone, preventing them from learning of negative publicly available information about him. Carlini persuaded the parents to invest \$150,000 in what he claimed was a legal medical marijuana growing business. Carlini is the subject of an [order of the Securities Commissioner](#) permanently barring him from, among other things, offering or issuing securities including promissory notes. Carlini issued the parents a promissory note in violation of the Securities order in exchange for their investment of \$150,000. An analysis of Carlini’s bank records revealed no investment from the \$150,000 in any identifiable medical marijuana related business. Rather, Carlini used the money for other purposes including restaurant meals, payments to various creditors and associates, the purchase of home furnishings, an automobile, and window tinting. Carlini also persuaded the parents to pay \$12,000 to his company to construct a driveway for them. Carlini was not licensed to do such work, he did not seek any permits, and no work was ever done.

In late 2019, Carlini again provided a fictitious name, Hevi W., to another romantic partner and presented her with falsified documents bearing that name. He persuaded her to invest \$25,000 in cash in what he claimed was a solar energy business. Carlini offered her a promissory note in exchange for her investment and provided her with an unexecuted note, in violation of the Securities Order. There is no indication of any actual investment by Carlini in a solar business and no funds have been returned.

Also in late 2019, Carlini convinced a third romantic partner to lease an apartment and purchase three vehicles in her name with the understanding that he would make the payments. Carlini did not make the payments as promised, and in fact persuaded her to transfer \$4,300 to him to make the payments, claiming that the money he had intended to use to make the payments was stolen and that he would pay her back shortly. A review of his bank records indicated that Carlini used the \$4,300 for other purposes and did not make any payments as promised or repay any money.

In making today's announcement, Attorney General Frosh thanked the Fraud and Corruption Unit, specifically Assistant Attorney General Alexander Huggins and Investigative Auditor Harry Armstrong, for their hard work on this case, and the Maryland State Police for their assistance.

<https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2022/070822.pdf>