

# Media Statement



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**TO: ALL MEDIA**

**DATE: 19 MARCH 2019**

**RE: REDDERSBURG FRAUDSTER SENTENCED TO 12 YEARS**

A 53 year-old man from Reddersburg in the Free State was last week sentenced to an effective 12 years imprisonment after he was found guilty of two counts of fraud and four counts of forgery by the Bloemfontein Specialised Commercial Crimes Court. Magistrate Dawn Somaru sentenced Jacobus Albertus Coetzee for offences that were committed between June and July 2006.

The accused was, at the time of the commission of the offences, employed by the Department of Housing in the Free State. He had financial problems and was not able to honour the repayment of his home loan. The bank wanted to repossess the house as he was in arrears. He then decided to give out a false salary advice, bank statements and driver's license bearing his gardener's personal details to ABSA and Wesbank in order to get financing on his house and a vehicle to the value of R 1 372 000.00.

The accused submitted to the bank details of his gardener in which he pretended that his gardener is employed by one of the Free State provincial government department as a director whilst this was not true. He also acted as an agent selling his house and was paid R100 000 as a commission. The gardener passed away before the start of the trial. The matter was delayed on numerous occasions due to the failure of the accused to attend court proceedings.

In aggravation of sentence, State Prosecutor Vick De Bruyn requested the court to sentence Coetzee to a maximum sentence because of the seriousness of the offences, the amount of money and the planning involved. "The accused has a criminal history. He had many encounters with the courts before, with a string of previous convictions but all those previous convictions could not dissuade him from being involved in criminal activities. The court can therefore, not show him any mercy, but sentence him to a term of direct imprisonment", said De Bruyn.

Magistrate Somaru concurred with the prosecutor and sentenced Coetzee to 12 years imprisonment.

Kind Regards,

**Phaladi Shuping**

**Regional Spokesperson: DPP Free State**

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