

Nurse pleads guilty in body parts scam

by UPI

PHILADELPHIA - A former surgical nurse has admitted participating in the illegal sale of body parts and tissue from 244 dead Philadelphia residents. Lee Cruceta of Monroe, N.Y., pleaded guilty Wednesday in Philadelphia in a deal that includes a six-year, eight-month sentence, the Philadelphia Daily News reported. Assistant District Attorney Bruce Sagel said that Cruceta has been cooperating in the investigation since his arrest last year. Cruceta was employed by Biomedical Tissue Services of Fort Lee, N.J. Bruce Mastromarino, the company's founder, allegedly made agreements with three funeral-home operators in 2004 to supply human tissue, officials said. Sagel said during the hearing that the funeral homes would falsify or omit information on the cause of death. Cruceta admitted faking documents and, in some cases, supplying disease-free blood to hide tissue that had been taken from someone who had died of an infectious disease. Cruceta, who has also pleaded guilty in New York, will serve his sentence there.

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