Couple jailed for conning man with marriage

ZIMBABWE

Harare

A Harare couple, which played brother and sister with the husband marrying off the wife to an unsuspecting suitor for a bride price of $3,000 has been jailed for 30 months each.

Brian Nkatazo Mathe (30) and wife Stephanie Pullen (20), both from the high-density suburb of Mbare, opened a Facebook account in February, which they used to lure 56-year-old Nyakanyaka Msipani into a false love relationship, which culminated in the perceived marriage, *The Herald* reported yesterday.

Magistrate Victoria Mashamba suspended a year each on their jail terms for five years on condition of good behaviour and another six months on condition that they restitute Msipani 4,029 dollars.

After opening the Facebook account and hooking up with Msipani, Pullen introduced her husband Mathe as a brother and said that the bride price should be paid to him since their parents were dead. Msipani paid $3,000, with Mathe presiding over the marriage ceremony and said he would accompany Pullen to his residence after two weeks. The love-struck Msipani received a call from Mathe just before the two weeks lapsed and was told that Pullen needed urgent medical assistance and caused him to pay more money for medical bills and groceries before they disappeared.

Msipani later met Mathe in town and caused his arrest. In passing the sentence, magistrate Mashamba said the couple deserved a custodial sentence.

"They caused emotional and psychological stress to the complainant who believed that he was getting married," she said.

Xinhua

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