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Former office manager accused in major theft from Bon Air dental practice

By Mark Bowes

A longtime office manager for a Bon Air dentist has been charged with stealing hundreds of thousands of dollars from his employer's practice and from a lucrative side business the two men operated as partners.

David B. Kagey, 56, was arrested Feb. 21 and charged with five counts of embezzlement and one count of burglary with the intent to commit a felony, court records show.

Kagey is accused of misappropriating funds from the dental practice of Dr. Edward Gardner & Associates at 8153 Forest Hill Ave., and from a side business the two men ran, Insight Dental Advisors, between Jan. 1, 2006, and Dec. 31, 2010, according to police, Gardner and court documents.

The theft was a both a personal and professional blow to Gardner, who considered Kagey a trusted business partner and a best friend.

"I trusted him with my books, and obviously the money," Gardner said Tuesday. "When you travel with somebody, vacation with them and have been in business with them — that's really the ultimate betrayal. That's what really hurt."

The theft involved "hundreds of thousands of dollars," although the precise amount is still under investigation, according to Gardner and Chesterfield County police Lt. T.O. McCullough.

"It was a substantial amount of money," McCullough said.

Gardner said he and his daughter, who also works for the practice, discovered the theft in mid-January while they were reviewing business expenses for 2010.

"When the (size of the theft) got to a certain point, that's when I knew I had to turn it over" to authorities, Gardner said. "It wasn't something that I could handle."

Kagey is accused of taking money from the practice's business accounts, to which he had access, in addition to fraudulently claiming reimbursement for various business expenses, such as travel, laundry, entertainment and meals, McCullough and Gardner said.

G. Manoli Loupassi, Kagey's attorney, said he was reserving comment until he learned more about the allegations.

Kagey served as Gardner's office manager for more than 10 years and was a partner in a side business that helped other dentists integrate into their practices an orthodontic procedure known as Invisalign, which straightens teeth using clear, plastic aligner trays instead of wires and brackets.

Gardner, with Kagey's help, would travel the country giving seminars and doing consulting work with dentists interested in the procedure, Gardner said.

Kagey left as the practice's office administrator in mid-November, Gardner said. He has been released on bond pending a hearing May 1 in Chesterfield General District Court.

Kagey is the second person to be charged in recent weeks with a crime related to a dental practice in Chesterfield.

On Feb. 11, Jose A. Hernandez, 53, a native of Mexico, was charged with performing invasive dental procedures on patients without a license inside his Hull Street Road home. Police said Hernandez, who authorities believe was residing in the U.S. illegally, operated an illegal dentistry practice known as LA Dental Lab since at least 2005.

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