



William Hiltz BSc MBA CET
Fraud Examiner / Data Auditor
201-503-3742
844-335-7775
www.hiltzandassociates.com
f t in

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Woman Convicted of Embezzling from Santa Barbara Employer Sentenced to 5 Years in Prison

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By [Giana Magnoli](#), Noozhawk Staff Writer | [@magnoli](#)

Officials say Kim Herman manipulated the records system to cover up third-party checks she wrote over seven years totaling \$365,000

A woman convicted of embezzling \$365,000 from her Santa Barbara employer was sentenced to five years in prison on Friday by [Santa Barbara County Superior Court](#) Judge Clifford Anderson.

Kim Herman, 52, pleaded no contest to grand theft by embezzlement with a special allegation of excessive loss — more than \$200,000. She worked for local prosthetic and cosmetic dentist Dr. Marc Alexander for nine years, and bank records show she stole money from him during seven of those years, according to Senior Deputy District Attorney Brian Cota.

Alexander and his office manager were alerted to the thefts when Herman's bank called to question her deposits of third-party checks in March 2010. Cota said she had found a way to manipulate the dentist office's record system to bypass security and alter financial records so that accounts never showed a deficit, then wrote checks to herself totaling about \$4,000 a month.



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Cota said such long-term embezzlement cases are often prompted by opportunity, not necessity, and the [District Attorney's Office](#) is taking a strong stance with cases in which the person is in a position of trust. Herman essentially doubled her income to live beyond her means, according to Cota.

Judge Anderson ordered Herman to pay \$365,000 in restitution, but Alexander may never see it. Cota said the ruling will get transferred to a civil judgment so she could owe some money if she gets a well-paying job, but there are no assets to seize — the debt on her house is more than it's worth

because of the market.

Cota said he is seeing more and more embezzlement cases in which the perpetrator is in a position of trust — employees, family members and elder abuse cases — and advises everyone to have two sets of eyes looking over all financial transactions.

In court Friday morning, Alexander explained how Herman had joined his private practice in 2002, soon after he started it.

“She seemed to be a model employee, working hard, appearing to be loyal and staying late with me while I worked hard, long hours to make the practice flourish,” Alexander said.

He said he was bewildered over why the business wasn't making a decent profit margin, and he had to borrow money every year to meet his tax burden. But he trusted her like a family member.

“Now at 52, I am still in debt, without any retirement fund and no college fund for my three children,” Alexander said.

At his Coast Village Road office, he and his office manager have cleaned up the records system and now would notice if even a dime went missing, but “the damage is done.”

Alexander said he has no feelings of joy or closure knowing Herman is going to prison and can't believe she was “so deliberate and so calculating for so many years.”

Herman will serve half-time and will be eligible to be released after 2½ years.

“What this woman has done has and will have an everlasting effect on my life, family, work and retirement years,” Alexander said.

Herman's attorney, Adam Pearlman, asked the judge for the lowest term of sentencing since she admitted guilt early on, but Cota's arguments won out. Herman tried to minimize her crime and only admitted guilt when “she knew her scheme was discovered,” he said.

Anderson did delay the sentence for two months because Herman's daughter is recovering from a hand transplant at [UCLA Medical Center](#), and nurses there asked for Herman's presence and support.

— [Noozhawk](#) staff writer [Giana Magnoli](#) can be reached at gmagnoli@noozhawk.com. Follow Noozhawk on Twitter: [@noozhawk](#) or [@NoozhawkNews](#). Become a fan of Noozhawk on [Facebook](#).

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