

OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

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DA 09-193

RELEASE NUMBER

September 5, 2013

RELEASE DATE

APPROVED BY JOYCE E. DUDLEY, DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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September 5, 2013

Re: Former Business Office Supervisor for Santa Barbara Police Department Sentenced to 10 Years State Prison for Theft of Public Funds and Filing False Tax Returns

District Attorney Joyce E. Dudley announced today that on September 5, 2013, Karen Flores, age 48, was sentenced in Santa Barbara Superior Court by the Honorable George Eskin to 10 years state prison. Ms. Flores pled guilty on May 3, 2013 to a felony charge of misappropriation of public funds, and 5 felony charges of filing a false tax return. She also admitted an enhancement that the amount of theft exceeded \$500,000.

Ms. Flores was employed by the Santa Barbara Police Department (SBPD) for approximately 15 years prior to her arrest in July 2011. She had been the SBPD Business Office Supervisor since 2004. In her role as Business Office Supervisor, she had the day-to-day oversight of all functions at the Business Office, including the collection and tracking of the parking citation revenue.

In late 2009, the City Finance Department noted discrepancies between the Police Department's automated parking citation system (PCS) and the City's general ledger. The City worked with the Police Department to attempt to resolve the discrepancies. The parking citation collection process can be very complicated. Therefore, it could not be concluded early on that the discrepancies were as a result of theft. One of the people tasked with working with the City on the discrepancies was Ms. Flores, as she was considered the most knowledgeable at the SBPD regarding the PCS, and was a trusted employee. It was later determined by the City that the discrepancies were from theft, and that Ms. Flores was the likely suspect. An investigation by the Santa Barbara District Attorney's Office led to the arrest of Ms. Flores. It was later determined through a thorough accounting of the PCS and Ms. Flores's personal financial records that Ms. Flores had been stealing from the SBPD since she had been promoted to Business Office Supervisor in 2004.

In addition to the 10 year state prison sentence, she was ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$684,953 to the City of Santa Barbara, which covers the amount of theft (\$609,953) and the cost of the forensic audit by the City (\$75,000), as well as restitution to the Franchise Tax Board in the amount of \$112,639.

Ms. Flores was remanded into custody at the conclusion of the sentencing hearing.

Additionally, pursuant to the recently enacted California Government Code section 7522.72, with this conviction Ms. Flores forfeits all her retirement benefits from the City of Santa Barbara earned or accrued from June 30, 2004 to August 4, 2011.

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