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PRESS RELEASE

ANDERSON WOMAN SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR EMBEZZLEMENT

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This morning an Anderson woman was sentenced to sixteen months in prison following her conviction for Embezzlement. Judge James Ruggiero sentenced Phyllis Ann Chambers, 48, after denying her request for a grant of probation.

The conviction stemmed from Chambers' employment at SJ Denham, where she worked as a bookkeeper from 2000 through early 2008. Over a period of years, Chambers systematically stole cash from bank deposits and replaced the money with personal checks from her own checking account, which had no funds on deposit. She then covered up the thefts by destroying the notices regarding the insufficient checks. She also wrote a check from SJ Denham's account to cover her past due mortgage, and had funds electronically transferred from Denham's accounts to pay her PG&E bill. She was able to hide the records of these transactions because she was in charge of receiving the mail, and reconciling the bank statements. It was an elaborate and complicated scheme which was only discovered when another accounting clerk was asked by the office manager to confirm that a credit had been received by SJ Denham. There, the clerk discovered a PG&E payment from the business's account. When confronted, Chambers told her co-workers that the charge was an error on PG&E's part. Further review uncovered the stolen cash deposits and forged check.

The aggregate total loss to SJ Denham was \$127,438.64. Chambers was able to repay the money with the help of her family. This case is an excellent example of why business owners need to regularly review their accounts, and should institute policies which prevent these types of crimes from occurring. In this case, Chambers was in charge of the daily tallying of cash received and preparing the deposits for the bank. She also received the bank statements, so nobody ever knew about the bounced checks she was writing. This allowed Chambers to cover up her thefts for many years before being detected.

The case was prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Erin M. Dervin, and investigated by the Redding Police Department Investigator Rob Wilson.