

Prison for attorney who soaked clients to fund \$40k-a-month lifestyle

Redmond lawyer who stole from injured clients hoped for 90-day sentence, gets 3 1/2 years

BY LEVI PULKKINEN
SEATTLEPI.COM STAFF
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A Redmond attorney caught stealing hundreds of thousands of dollars from his clients has been sentenced to 3 ½ years in prison.

Personal injury attorney Brian Kirk Boddy bilked 18 of his clients during a three-year crime spree, stealing \$440,000 before the thefts were discovered following a Washington State Bar Association investigation. Boddy, 51, ultimately pleaded guilty to felony theft charges after claiming he turned to crime to meet the financial demands.

Questioned by police, Boddy said he and his soon-to-be ex “had become accustomed to a lavish lifestyle that generated living expenses of \$40K per month.” He stole from people injured in car crashes and accidents to support that lifestyle.

Boddy settled the clients’ claims – sometimes without their consent – and deposited the money in accounts he could raid. Renting space at a reputable law office in Kirkland, Boddy specialized in car crash and slip-and-fall civil lawsuits against insurance companies.

The \$433,500 theft spree went on for more than three years, ending in September after Kirkland police launched an investigation. Boddy has since resigned his law license and was charged criminally in June 2014, nearly a year after he and his wife sold off a pair of million-dollar homes.

While the money helped Boddy keep up appearances as his practice failed, the thefts left his clients in severe financial jeopardy.

“In many cases Boddy’s theft has left his victim clients financially destitute and hounded by insurance carriers and medical providers for unpaid medical expenses relating to their injuries,” a Kirkland Police Department detective told the court.

Most of Boddy’s former clients hired him to represent them in personal injury lawsuits seeking payment from insurance carriers for medical costs, lost pay and property damage.

As it turned out, Boddy was settling lawsuits without his clients' knowledge and cashing the checks cut by insurers. Boddy forged his clients' signatures, and then lied to them about the status of their lawsuits.

One woman told police Boddy settled her lawsuit after she instructed him not to, and then refused to hand over her share of the settlement. Another woman, who'd been seriously injured in a car crash, told officers Boddy kept the entire \$175,000 settlement she reached.

All told, at least 16 people were defrauded by Boddy, according to prosecutors. Investigators contend the clients lost anywhere from \$5,000 to \$154,000 to Boddy.

Interviewed by police, Boddy admitted to the thefts and the settlement fraud. Asked why he did it, Boddy said he and his wife were divorcing and he could no longer afford their lifestyle.

"He stated that at one time his practice was lucrative enough to support this lifestyle but when his income began to falter he began using money he obtained from client settlements to cover the gap in his personal expenses," the detective said in charging papers.

Arguing for a reduced sentence, Boddy's public defender described him as a man broken by the "prolonged strain" of marriage, overwork and depression.

Writing the court, defense attorney Joshua Andrews said Boddy had hoped to repay the stolen money with a big win – a larger case he expected to settle for \$2 million, from which Boddy would likely have taken more than \$660,000. That lawsuit fell apart, Andrews said, as did Boddy.

Born and raised in the Tri-Cities, Boddy served four years in the Air Force before attending college. He graduated from Seattle University law school and, in 1998, founded his own personal injury practice. He married five years later.

Boddy and his wife split in an acrimonious divorce filed in 2013. Boddy sought help for anxiety and depression, and, according to his attorney, was rebounding when the thefts were discovered. Andrews said Boddy plans to go into real estate when he is released.

King County Superior Court Judge Mary Roberts, sentencing Boddy on Thursday, ordered that Boddy pay \$430,991 in restitution. Boddy previously pleaded guilty to 10 first-degree theft counts.

Writing the court, Senior Deputy Prosecutor Scott Peterson described that restitution figure as "conservative," largely because Boddy was given credit for the fees and costs he would've legitimately charged against the settlements.

“It is debatable whether Boddy was entitled to any fee after forging his clients’ names to settlement agreements and checks and stealing their settlement money,” Peterson told the court.

Boddy was jailed immediately after the sentencing hearing and is expected to be transferred to state prison in coming days. Prosecutors had asked for a five-year prison term, while Boddy’s attorney argued a 90-day jail term was appropriate.

Seattlepi.com reporter Levi Pulkkinen can be reached at 206-448-8348 or levipulkkinen@seattlepi.com. Follow Levi on Twitter at twitter.com/levipulk.