



# Corona

## Riverside woman sentenced in embezzlement from Corona company



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By SARAH GORDON  
The Press-Enterprise

A Riverside woman was sentenced Friday to more than three years in state prison for her role in embezzling more than \$260,000 from a Corona company over a five-year period.

Amber Peralta, 26, the former office manager for Kelsoe & Associates land surveying, was sentenced to three years and four months for two counts of unauthorized use of another's identity to obtain credit.

In early February, her husband, Joe Peralta, 28, who also worked for the company, was sentenced to three years' probation and 180 days of community service and ordered to pay \$260,287 in restitution on one count of the same charge.

The two pleaded guilty to reduced charges in February. They had each originally faced 145 counts of the unauthorized use of another person's identity.

Bob Kelsoe, president and owner of the victimized company, said he was satisfied with the sentences and glad that his company had remained financially sound through five years of theft. The embezzlement occurred from 2001 to 2006, and the thefts averaged about \$5,000 a month.

According to court records, the Peraltas would write company checks to themselves or to pay bills, and then Amber Peralta would edit the computer entries and bank statements.

Kelsoe said he and his wife, Lisa, considered the theft a personal betrayal.

"We were kind of mentoring them and helping them along," said Kelsoe, noting that he hired Amber Peralta as a receptionist out of high school and taught her to run the office.

Shortly after that, he hired Joe Peralta, then Amber's boyfriend, as an apprentice land surveyor and paid for his college, Kelsoe said.

"We thought they had a really bright future," Kelsoe said. "My wife helped with making their wedding decorations and made their wedding cake."

The Kelsoes have kept their own books since they discovered the Peraltas' crimes early last year. They don't foresee handing off the duty anytime soon.

"We have to heal some wounds first," Kelsoe said.

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