



Lisa Hansen

In September 2005, Lisa Hansen, a receptionist at a Grand Rapids, Michigan, salon, deposited the company's receipts in the bank's night drop box as part of her routine responsibilities. Two days later, her manager discovered that the deposit was missing. Security officials at the bank claimed that none of the security cameras recorded Hansen's presence on the night she claimed to have made the drop. Hansen, who denied stealing the money and refused to repay it, was fired in October 2005. In December 2005, Hansen submitted to a lie detector test, but failed after the operator badgered her and deemed her responses "deceptive." Hansen was arrested in January 2006 and charged with embezzlement. On the advice of her attorney, she elected to plead guilty, but the judge rejected her plea, and Hansen entered a diversion program which cost her \$400 and required 40 hours of community service. She completed the program and charges were dismissed in April 2006.

In August 2006, a bank employee found the missing deposit bag lodged in the night drop. The police department notified Hansen and apologized to her; and the prosecutor offered to repay the fee for the diversion program and pay her \$10 per hour for her 40 hours of community service. That same month, Hansen reached an out-of-court settlement with the bank that lost her nighttime deposit.

- *Stephanie Denzel*

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State: Michigan

County: Kent

Most Serious Crime: Theft

Additional Convictions:

Reported Crime Date: 2005

Convicted: 2006

Exonerated: 2006

Sentence: Community service

Race: Caucasian

Sex: Female

Age: 25

Contributing Factors:

Did DNA evidence contribute to the exoneration? No
:

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The National Registry of Exonerations is a joint project of the University of the Michigan Law School and the Center on Wrongful Convictions at Northwestern University School of Law.

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<http://truthinjustice.org/lisa-hansen.htm>

Detroit Free Press

www.freep.com

Grand Rapids, Michigan woman punished and humiliated, and now exonerated

August 18, 2006

GRAND RAPIDS — Accused of stealing money from work, Lisa Hansen has maintained her innocence.

She said after leaving her receptionist job at a Panopoulos salon last Sept. 3, she had placed a bag containing \$80 in cash and \$345 in checks that belonged to the company in the night depository of a Huntington National bank branch, just as she was supposed to do.

Several days later, her manager told her that the money was missing. He fired her but promised that the company wouldn't press charges if she returned the cash and the checks.

The Grand Rapids woman said she did nothing wrong. She was subsequently arrested, jailed and punished.

Then, on Aug. 9, a bank worker found the money — right where Hansen had said she'd left it nearly a year earlier. Huntington officials will say only that the bag had become lodged and hidden within the depository.

A Grand Rapids police detective called the woman to give her the news — and to apologize on behalf of the department.

"I cried," Hansen, 25, told the Grand Rapids Press for a report published Friday. "It was all that emotional buildup for a year that I just let go.

"I was hurt more than anything. It was embarrassing. I hid it from my family and most of my friends."

The police seemed to have a solid case. Not only was the money missing, a Huntington security investigator told police that the Columbus, Ohio-based bank's 15 surveillance cameras at that branch showed no one had stopped at the night depository at the time Hansen had said she was there.

The investigator said, "it was unlikely anyone could have avoided detection."

Hansen also failed a lie-detector test administered by a Michigan State Police sergeant.

Her court-appointed lawyer recommended that she plead guilty to a misdemeanor embezzlement charge to avoid a trial and possible jail sentence. Grand Rapids District Judge David Buter refused to accept Hansen's plea after he asked her to explain what she'd done to make her guilty.

The charge was dropped after she performed 40 hours of community service in a court-diversion program, but her name was not cleared.

Hansen's current attorney, Gerald R. Stahl, said the case exposes flaws in the bank's security system and cracks in the judicial system.

Huntington officials should have checked the area around the box more thoroughly, he said. He also wondered why Hansen's image was not picked up by the bank's cameras.

He questioned the lie-detector test, saying the polygraph operator badgered her before accusing her of lying.

On Tuesday, Stahl filed a claim with the bank, saying it was negligent. He wants Huntington to pay Hansen for lost wages for the last year, though he didn't specify an amount. He also cited mental anguish.

If the bank doesn't settle, he will file a lawsuit, he said. He doesn't plan to take action against police or Panopoulos salons.

Huntington spokesman Mike Lindley declined to comment about the matter, other than to say the bag of money was found in a depository "mechanism." He did not elaborate.

The manager of the Panopoulos salon, Carol Latham, who pushed for criminal charges, also declined to comment.

Hansen's community service involved filing papers at Kent County Friend of the Court every Friday for a month.

Kent County Prosecutor William Forsyth offered to repay her \$400 fee for entering the diversion program and pay her \$10 per hour for her 40 hours of community service.

After completing her community service, Hansen moved to Florida to attend college but she recently returned to Grand Rapids after her mother was diagnosed with cancer.

"This has been a huge burden to bear for a year. It feels wonderful that it doesn't need to be my burden anymore," she said of her exoneration.

<http://www.victimsofthestate.org/Name/H1.html>

Kent County, MI

Lisa Hansen

Sept 3, 2005 (Grand Rapids)

Lisa Hansen was fined \$400 and sentenced to 40 hours of community service for stealing a bank deposit bag that she was supposed to deposit in a night depository. The deposit bag contained mostly checks and only \$80 in cash. A bank security investigator told police that the bank's 15 surveillance cameras showed no one had stopped at the night depository during the time Hansen said she was there. Hansen also failed a lie detector test administered by the Michigan State Police. Nearly a year later, on Aug. 9, 2006, a bank worker found Hansen's deposit bag lodged and hidden within the bank's depository. (*Detroit Free Press*) [3/07]