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EDMONTON - A former Workers' Compensation Board case manager has received a three-year prison sentence for defrauding her employer of nearly \$800,000.

BY THE EDMONTON JOURNAL OCTOBER 16, 2008 BE THE FIRST TO POST A COMMENT

EDMONTON - A former Workers' Compensation Board case manager has received a three-year prison sentence for defrauding her employer of nearly \$800,000.

Sandra Leona Plumite must also return \$769,106.77 to the WCB, the amount she illegally paid to more than a dozen workers between May 2000 and June 2003, said Court of Queen's Bench Justice Robert Graesser.

Defence lawyer Harold Brubaker said he had hoped his client would be given a conditional sentence to be served in the community.

He said given Plumite's psychiatric conditions, she would have benefited more from receiving treatment under house arrest than from serving time a prison sentence.

Psychologist Reuben Lang had testified earlier in court that Plumite suffered from several psychiatric disorders, including post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, borderline personality disorder and agoraphobia. Lang said Plumite experienced "many losses" and "deep trauma" throughout her life and overpaid the workers out of a sense of compassion.

Plumite, 40, was hired by the WCB in February 2000 using a doctored resume, claiming she had two diplomas from Grant MacEwan College and a previous job at the Bank of Montreal.

Her job involved assessing claims from injured workers and calculating their owed benefits.

In August, Plumite pleaded guilty to defrauding the WCB, as well as to accepting a secret commission and uttering a forged document.

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She admitted to overpaying 14 workers using falsified claims, sometimes providing child-care expenses to people without children and even making payments to a dead man. Plumite also once reopened a friend's file and used WCB money to repay \$6,900 she borrowed from him.

Plumite further pocketed nearly tens of thousands in kickbacks from an injured worker named Gurcharn Singh Sidhu.

On top of his biweekly disability payments, Plumite sent Sidhu 59 cheques equalling more than \$321,000 and, in turn, he made eight transfers into her account totalling \$117,500.

Sidhu plead guilty in January to paying a secret commission and is serving a two-year conditional sentence followed by three years probation.

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