

NEWS RELEASE



***OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
San Diego, California***

***United States Attorney
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For Immediate Release

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY -March 12, 2007

United States Attorney Karen P. Hewitt announced that attorney Michael Robert Suverkrubbe, formerly a criminal investigator with the Internal Revenue Service, and Wendy Lee Hixson were sentenced today in federal court in San Diego following their convictions on one count of conspiracy and one count of money laundering, all arising from their participation in a scheme to defraud clients of Suverkrubbe's law firm and two federally-insured financial institutions. Suverkrubbe and Hixson were sentenced to serve 24 months and 18 months in custody, respectively, and three years of supervised release after each entered a guilty plea pursuant to a plea agreement. Suverkrubbe and Hixson also were ordered to pay \$390,000 in restitution to the victims of their crimes.

Prior to July 2004, Suverkrubbe and Hixson were associated with "xélan, Inc.," a financial and tax planning firm that specialized in "tax strategies" for its members. After July 2004, Suverkrubbe severed his

relationship with xélan, formed his own law firm, and hired Hixson to be his Chief Financial Officer. In connection with their guilty pleas, Suverkrubbe and Hixson admitted they defrauded former xélan clients and financial institutions through a series of misrepresentations and misuse of access to their financial accounts.

United States Attorney Karen Hewitt said, “We will continue to do all we can to hold accountable those whose criminal conduct cheats the public and erodes our confidence in members of the legal community and law enforcement.”

FBI Special Agent in Charge Daniel R. Dzwilewski commented, “The FBI will continue to investigate allegations of wrongdoing, regardless of the position an individual holds. Though this investigation has come to a close and Mr. Suverkrubbe is facing his sentence, it is disheartening to know that a former federal agent used his knowledge and expertise to violate the law.”

“It is disheartening when a former law enforcement officer disregards his training and tarnishes the badge for personal financial gain. The criminal behavior of one former law enforcement officer should not put a stain on the badges of the men and women that daily answer the call to serve this great nation. IRS Criminal Investigation stands ready to expose and swiftly bring to justice those who choose to launder money from their criminal behavior and tarnish the shield of Justice,” said Kenneth J. Hines, Special Agent in Charge, IRS Criminal Investigation, San Diego Field Office.

“Today's sentencing represents the U.S. Postal Inspection Service's commitment to protect the American public from those who misuse our nation's mail system,” said Inspector in Charge Oscar Villanueva. “Postal Inspectors are committed to aggressively investigating these cases and bringing the perpetrators to justice.”

DEFENDANTS

Michael Robert Suverkrubbe
Wendy Lee Hixson

Case Number 06CR1262-W

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

- 1) Conspiracy (18 U.S.C. § 371): Maximum punishment of 5 years' imprisonment, a fine of \$250,000 and three years' supervised released.

- 2) Money Laundering (18 U.S.C. § 1957): Maximum punishment of 10 years' imprisonment, a fine of \$250,000, and three years' supervised release.

AGENCIES

Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Postal Inspection Service
Internal Revenue Service -- Criminal Investigation