

**Public guardian accused of stealing \$100,000 enters plea, *Susan Samples* (April 13, 2025)**

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GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (WOOD) — A West Michigan guardian who stole from people she was supposed to protect faces up to ten years in prison.

Kimberley St. Onge pleaded no contest in a Kent County courtroom Thursday afternoon to three counts of embezzlement from a vulnerable adult between \$20,000 and \$50,000.

St. Onge's attorney told a judge that her client pleaded no contest due to potential civil liability; a no contest plea is not an admission of guilt, but it's treated as such for sentencing purposes.

Each of the three counts carries up to ten years in prison, and 17th Circuit Court Judge George J. Quist could order those sentences to run consecutively instead of concurrently, which is more common.

"Unfortunately, this woman took a lot of money from a lot of vulnerable people," Kent County Prosecutor Chris Becker told Target 8. "Caused a lot of harm."

Becker said St. Onge stole more than \$100,000 from 13 vulnerable adults for whom she served as guardian.

St. Onge had no criminal record when she applied to become a public guardian through Kent County Probate Court. The guardianship program confirmed that St. Onge served in that role from May 2023 to May 2024.

The program also confirmed that it runs criminal record, central registry and credit checks on all who apply to become guardians.

According to a police report obtained by Target 8, St. Onge convinced the Social Security Office to put her name on one of her ward's benefit checks and mail it to her private P.O. Box.

Grand Rapids Police reported that St. Onge also wrote checks to her own family on her wards' bank accounts, made unauthorized transfers and ATM withdrawals, and spent the money on gas, a hotel, Taco Bell and T-Mobile, among other purchases.

"The real tragic part is they're not getting their money back," said Becker. "I mean, yeah, there will be a restitution order, and they'll be told they have to pay this, but when you're talking about this kind of money, it's not like they're putting it in a savings account. It's gone. We don't know where exactly the money went. It's not like (St. Onge) had a whole lot of assets."

Becker encourages people to watch out for each other, especially the most vulnerable among us.

"I always ask the people around the vulnerable people, be the eyes and ears," explained Becker. "If a vulnerable person has a guardian, they usually have some sort of mental incapacity, some short-term memory loss. They don't know what's happening. But if they're being isolated, that's the biggest thing, if they're isolated without any other contact with anybody else, that's when they're really susceptible to being a target and being victimized like this."

St. Onge is scheduled for sentencing in Kent County Circuit Court May 12.