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## Dentist who helped pimps wants to work again

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Onetime Chicago dentist Gary Kimmel went to prison in 2009 after he admitted he aided pimps in a prostitution trafficking ring.

The aid included providing space in Marina Towers for paid sex acts to happen, buying luxury cars for pimps in his name and keeping his office open late to fix the teeth of battered prostitutes.

In one case, Kimmel fixed a prostitute's teeth for free in exchange for her performing sex acts for his friend, according to prosecutors.

That was back when Kimmel, affectionately referred to as "Doc" by those who know him, ran a popular and successful dental practice at 233 E. Erie.

In an emergency bid at the time of his indictment, the state stripped Kimmel of his ability to practice dentistry. He was sentenced to 37 months in 2009.

Now, Kimmel is already out of prison.

And despite his felony conviction, the Chicago Sun-Times has learned he is ready to practice dentistry again — and eligible to renew his license.

In early December in federal court, Judge Blanche Manning granted an early end to his court supervision, shaving off one year. That cleared the first major legal hurdle to restoring his license.

"We hope to have him back working as a dentist in no time," his lawyer, Joseph Lopez said.

While a new Illinois law went into effect this year aiming to strip health professionals of their licenses if they are convicted of sex crimes, it does not affect Kimmel, who officially pleaded guilty to one count of conspiring with others to conduct financial transactions related to illegal activities and affecting interstate commerce.

In his plea deal, Kimmel admits to knowingly doing business with three pimps who took part in human trafficking and to doing free work on the teeth of the three pimps and the prostitutes they brought in. Kimmel admitted not reporting the payments as income to his dental practice and admitted he knew the money came from trafficking proceeds.

A federal judge found there to be \$342,000 worth of laundered money between Kimmel and Robert Lewis Young. Known as "Blue Diamond," Young is now serving a 25-year sentence on human trafficking charges.

There are two categories for convictions of crimes that preclude professionals from getting a health care-related license: a crime that put them on the sex offender registry, or the individual was convicted of prostitution and wants to be a massage therapist, said Susan Hofer, a spokeswoman for the Illinois Department of Professional Regulation.

In Kimmel's case, he has been out of practice for five years, meaning he at the very least must retest for his license, said Hofer. His suspension order also calls for him paying a \$50,000 fine. Kimmel was sentenced to about three years in prison in January 2009. By December 2010, he was released to a halfway house and his term of supervised release began, according to a court filing.

The state says there is not an outright bar on Kimmel winning back his license but it will not be automatic.

Ultimately, the state board — and the director of the agency — would have to approve before Kimmel could get his license back, she said.

“There's a judgment call you have to make,” she said.

If Kimmel's license were reinstated, he would be placed on three years' probation, meaning he would be under the department of regulation's supervision for three years. Kimmel would have to report quarterly where he works, undergo a performance evaluation by a supervisor and disclose job duties, incident reports and any arrests or civil actions, including DUI and other offenses, Hofer said.

“If he's denied, we'll appeal to the circuit court,” Lopez said. “I should note that the judge let him off early from supervised release because of his exemplary conduct.”

Lopez argues his client's crime was only minimally intermingled with his dental practice.

“The only real allegation having to do with his work as a dentist, is involving one prostitute,” Lopez said. “Her teeth got knocked out, he was trying to help her. They need dentists just like everyone else needs dentists.”

However, evidence against Kimmel included that he regularly had contact with three violent pimps, men who trafficked dozens of women from Michigan to Hawaii.

Kimmel was overheard talking to a violent pimp on an FBI wiretap, admitted taking \$342,000 in cash from pimps and prostitutes and bought a slew of luxury vehicles — including a Mercedes, Lexus and a Corvette.

In one case, Kimmel can be overheard talking to a pimp on an FBI wiretap about how he used the “barter system” in his dental work. He fixed a prostitute's teeth and then had her perform two hours of sexual favors for a friend, according to court papers. Court records also show that one of the prostitutes Kimmel did work on at the request of a pimp was a minor girl.

She was being prostituted by Young, who was convicted after authorities uncovered a human trafficking network he ran that included using physical abuse to force underage women to prostitute themselves.

“As defendant (Kimmel) well knows, the minor girl was being prostituted by Young at the time that Young brought her to defendant for dental treatment,” federal prosecutors in Chicago wrote before Kimmel's sentencing.

Kristin Claes, spokeswoman for the Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation, said Kimmel's case highlights how prostitution — and trafficking — permeates different aspects of society, even where least expected, like a dental office.

“Generally speaking, we’re glad he served time at all,” said Claes. “In Illinois, there are thousands of people who facilitate the sex trade and are not prosecuted for these serious crimes.”

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