

Hoverboarding dentist gets 12 years in prison for fraud, unlawful dental acts

Enlarge / A man tests out a Hovertrax hoverboard produced by Razor at the International Toy Fair 2017 in Nuremberg, Germany, on January 1, 2017.

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The infamous hoverboarding dentist of Alaska has been found guilty of fraud and unlawful dental acts and was sentenced to 12 years in prison this week, according to the Anchorage Daily News.

Dentist Seth Lookhart was charged with 42 counts in 2017. Most of the charges related to a scheme to unnecessarily sedate patients or keep them sedated for extended periods of time so that Lookhart could inflate Medicaid billing. Prosecutors found that Lookhart extensively detailed the scheme himself in text messages and raked in nearly \$2 million from the unjustified sedation.

But, despite his lucrative sedations, Lookhart is likely best known for being the dentist who, in 2016, pulled a tooth from a sedated patient while wobbling on a wheeled “hoverboard” scooter. The evidence for this transgression again came from Lookhart himself, who had the hoverboard procedure captured on video. Lookhart then shared the video with several people.

- Video of Lookhart removing a tooth while on a hoverboard.
- Lookhart riding away from the tooth extraction on his hoverboard.

In the video—played in court last year and previously reported by Ars—Lookhart is seen standing over a sedated patient, swaying slightly on his hoverboard while extracting a tooth. Once done, he rolls out of the room, strips off his gloves, tosses them, and victoriously throws both hands in the air as he zooms away down a hallway.

Investigators identified the patient as Veronica Wilhelm, who got to confront Lookhart in court. When the prosecutor asked her how she would have responded to the hoverboard riding had she known and not been sedated, Wilhelm responded: “I would’ve said ‘Hell no!’” She also said she was angry that Lookhart sedated her son for a routine teeth cleaning.

“[You] probably could’ve been a really good dentist,” she said in court, directly addressing Lookhart. “I don’t have anything bad to say about taking out my tooth, I appreciate that, but I just think that what you did was outrageous, narcissistic you know, and crazy.”

In January, Anchorage Superior Court Judge Michael Wolverton found Lookhart guilty on all counts. He wrote in his ruling that the evidence against Lookhart was “simply overwhelming” and emphasized that the “overwhelming amount to evidence” against Lookhart “was often supported, and often in excruciating detail, by Dr. Lookhart’s own texts, photos, and videos.”

At sentencing this week, Wolverton said he was struck by how dangerous the sedations were for Lookhart’s patients. “In reviewing all this over and over again, I have this visceral response—you darn near killed some people,” he said.

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