

CHRONOLOGY OF WENATCHEE CASE

In June, 1996, 10 plaintiffs filed a complaint in Thurston County Superior Court claiming that state child advocates, local police and others violated the plaintiffs' civil and constitutional rights by using allegedly improper and coercive interview techniques to obtain incriminating information against potential child-abuse suspects.

Defendants named in the civil lawsuit included five state employees, the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), Chelan and Douglas counties, the City of Wenatchee, local police authorities and one private mental health therapist. The case against Chelan County later was severed from the current case and is pending.

In addition to DSHS, the complaint listed five individual defendants who were state employees working for DSHS's Child Protective Services (CPS) and Child Welfare Services. Those employees were CPS supervisor Tim Abbey, CPS social workers Laurie Alexander, Kate Carrow, Dean Reiman, and Child Welfare Services social worker Connie Saracino.

Pre-trial: State's profile minimized

A series of rulings by Spokane County Superior Court Judge Michael Donohue, who presided over the civil case, significantly reduced both the number of state defendants involved in the suit and the number of issues that would have to be decided at trial. The court ruled claims against the state by all but two plaintiffs should be dismissed.

Claims by plaintiffs Susan Everett and Karen Lopez claims were dismissed due to their repeated failures to appear at depositions.

Claims by plaintiffs Robert and Connie Roberson and Honna Sims were "dismissed" because the plaintiffs did not make allegations against the state in their amended complaint.

Claims by Donna Rodriguez and her daughter, Kim Allbee, over alleged violations of the state constitution, were also dismissed. The remainder of the state claims by Rodriguez and Allbee were allowed to continue to trial.

Claims against state narrowed to one

In May, the court considered a state motion to dismiss additional parts of the case on grounds that the plaintiffs had failed to produce sufficient evidence for a reasonable jury to find for the plaintiffs.

The court dismissed claims against four of the five individually named state employees (Laurie Alexander; Kate Carrow; Dean Reiman; and Connie Saracino), finding they had no real involvement in the events surrounding

Donna Rodriguez's arrest and the resulting placement of her daughter with her biological father.

That ruling left DSHS and Tim Abbey as the only remaining state defendants. The court then ruled that all but one claim against DSHS and Abbey, for negligence, should be dismissed due to insufficient evidence.

-30-

[Index](#)