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New detail on charges in sex case

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On one visit, the doctor fondled an undocumented and illiterate female patient – in front of her 9-year-old daughter, the woman told investigators. He raped her three times on another occasion and then threatened to report her to immigration authorities if she told anybody, she said.

Workers' compensation Dr. Scott Dodd Anderson says it never happened, and his lawyer said Friday all five of the women who accused his client of sexual misconduct – charges that resulted in the doctor's arrest and license suspension – are not to be believed.

Sacramento Superior Court Judge Peter Mering disagreed. He said he found the women's stories credible. At the end of Friday's preliminary hearing, the judge ordered Anderson, 61, to stand trial on 26 felony counts and 15 more misdemeanor charges.

The felony allegations include the three counts of rape by force, 18 counts of engaging in sex acts with patients, two forced oral copulations, two penetrations by force and one attempted sodomy. The misdemeanors: 14 sexual batteries and one indecent exposure.

Anderson's license was suspended by the California Medical Board one day after his April 6 arrest. A spokesman for U.S. HealthWorks, where the doctor formerly worked, sent The Bee an e-mail Friday afternoon to say the physician no longer works there.

According to the sheriff's investigators' testimony, the five women went to the occupational medicine clinic in the 9200 block of Folsom Boulevard from late 2007 to the fall of 2009 for their on-the-job injuries.

The women contacted the Sheriff's Department independent of each other, including two who went to detectives this year after Anderson's arrest.

Their accounts of what happened to them in Anderson's office were similar, according to the testimony of sheriff's Detective Brad Jones and Deputy Juan Hidalgo. They all said that Anderson, after beginning his examinations, slid his hands to the intimate areas of their bodies.

"What we have here is a pattern of conduct by Dr. Anderson with five different women," Deputy District Attorney Thienvu Ho argued. "This defendant was in a position of power as a workers' comp doctor. These women were going to him for their injuries, and he has chosen as a sexual predator that these were women to prey upon."

Hidalgo described the undocumented woman's rape allegation from a Sept. 22, 2009, visit to Anderson's office:

"He told her to unbutton her pants, and he forced her pants and underwear down (and) pushed her forward," Hidalgo said. Then he "grabbed her by the hair, rolled it up" and raped her three times, the deputy said.

When Anderson tried to sodomize her, "she reached back and pushed him away," Hidalgo testified. The deputy testified the woman said Anderson threatened "he would call INS if I told anyone."

Anderson's lawyer, Patrick K. Hanly, said in his summation there was "a premium on credibility" among the patients. He said there was no physical evidence to corroborate the women in what he described as primarily "a he-said, she-said case."

He said the woman who made the rape allegations had to be wrong because a translator accompanied her for her visits with the doctor – a contention that the prosecution disputed. Hanly said the women said they continued to see Anderson even after what they allege were the first inappropriate contacts. The repeat visits served to undermine their stories, the attorney argued – regardless of their concern that they feared the doctor would torpedo their comp cases.

"That's not a credible reason," Hanly said, "especially since these women were seeing other doctors."

The defense lawyer said civil suits filed by two of Anderson's accusers threw their credibility into question.

Outside court, a lawyer for the two women who filed the civil suit said that doctors hold the outcome of workers' comp cases totally in their own hands.

"All of them are in a workers' comp situation where the doctor decides the rating (on the extent of the occupational disability) and whether and when they go back to work," Kevin L. Elder said. "He decides their fate."

In ordering Anderson to trial, the judge said from the bench, "We have a very powerful pattern of conduct" in the case. He said it is "extremely unlikely" the five women got together to make up their stories and that the "unlikelihood" of their acting in concert "is the test of credibility."

Mering ordered the doctor, who is free on \$750,000 bail, back to court on Nov. 30 for further arraignment.

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