

Sacramento doctor accused of 22 counts in sexual assault trial

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The case against a Sacramento workers' compensation doctor accused of sexually assaulting his patients came to court Tuesday considerably lighter than when he was ordered to stand trial two years ago.

Dr. Scott Dodd Anderson had faced 26 felony and 15 misdemeanor counts at the conclusion of his Nov. 12, 2010, preliminary hearing. By the time the lawyers presented their opening statements to a Sacramento Superior Court jury Tuesday, the complaint had been pared to 13 felonies and nine misdemeanors.

The most serious charges in the original complaint were gone. Three counts of rape, two of forced oral copulation, two penetrations by force and one attempted sodomy had been stripped from the charging document, as had a misdemeanor accusation of indecent exposure.

Court records showed a total of 19 counts had been dismissed by the District Attorney's Office on Sept. 28 in the interest of justice.

Deputy District Attorney Laura West declined to discuss the dismissals, but in her opening statement, she told jurors they should have plenty of evidence to convict Anderson on the remaining 13 felony counts of him engaging in sexual contact with four patients and nine misdemeanor counts that he sexually battered them.

"This is a case about a doctor violating his position of trust by committing sexual offenses against four of his female patients during their examinations," West said.

Defense attorney Patrick K. Hanly countered in his opening that Anderson did nothing wrong and should be found innocent.

"If the allegations in this case were a bumper sticker, it would say, 'Unbelievable,' " Hanly said. "If it were a book, it would be fiction. If it were a movie, it would be a fantasy."

One of the four alleged victims testified Tuesday that Anderson touched her inappropriately when she visited him twice at the U.S. HealthWorks center on Folsom Boulevard in September 2009.

The woman, whose name is being withheld by The Bee because of the sexual nature of the allegations, said under questioning from West that she injured her back while working as a medical technician at a local assisted living facility.

She testified she had been treated by Anderson on several occasions without incident but that he shocked her when she went to see him on Sept. 23, 2009, and he put one of his hands in a place where it didn't belong.

Anderson made her lean over an examination table, the woman said, then got behind her and felt around the inside of her thighs before working his way upward. To make him stop, she said she told

him it "tickled." Then, she said, "My mind went blank."

"It's just something that never happened before – wow," the woman testified.

She said the touching "was uncomfortable" and left her in a state of "disbelief. I was kind of shocked, numb."

Scheduled for another appointment with Anderson the next week, the woman testified she canceled and rescheduled it for another day "because he mentioned he wouldn't be there" then. When he was, the woman said she still went ahead with the appointment with Anderson.

"It's a workman's comp case," she said. "You have to go to your doctor's appointment." If she didn't, "Maybe they'd stop treatment."

Once again, she said, Anderson shocked her. This time, she said he grabbed her nurses pant "scrubs" and yanked them below her waist.

She said she reported Anderson to a chiropractor, who took her into the center manager, who took a report from her. Anderson no longer works at U.S. HealthWorks.

On Hanly's cross-examination, the woman said Anderson never touched her beneath her clothing. She also testified her injury left her feeling pain on her inner thighs – where she claimed the most seriously inappropriate episode of touching began.

The woman testified she did not notice any expression of sexual gratification on Anderson's face. She told the jury Anderson displayed no emotion when she made her remarks to get him to remove his hand, but that testimony conflicted with the statement she gave to the U.S. HealthWorks manager – read to the jury by Hanly – that the doctor seemed shocked.

On the second visit, the woman testified he never touched her inappropriately after he pulled her scrubs below her waistline.

But the woman asserted she believes Anderson knew what he was doing when he touched her, that it was inappropriate and that it was intentional.

"It wasn't accidental – 'Sorry, I didn't mean to touch you there,' " she answered to a question from West. "It wasn't like that."

The trial is estimated to last through Nov. 1.

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