



Woodland Dentist Convicted of Molesting Patients

Written for the web by Posted By: [Mark Hedlund](#), Reporter

WOODLAND, CA - After eight days of deliberation, a Yolo County jury found Dr. Mark Anderson guilty of sexual battery on 10 of his female patients.

Dr. Anderson was declared guilty on 12 counts, eleven of them felonies. The jury found him not guilty on 2 felonies involving two victims and deadlocked on 6 counts connected to one patient.

After the verdict, Anderson was allowed to remain out of custody on bail until his sentencing set for April 24. He could face up to 14 years in state prison on the convictions.

Leaving court holding hands with his wife and surrounded by family, Anderson declined comment.

The length of deliberations was somewhat surprising, even to the judge who presided over the two months trial.

"This is one of the longest jury deliberations I've ever been involved with. It's obvious you've been meticulous," Judge Stephen Mock told the jury while thanking them for their service.

The jury got the case almost two weeks ago, on Wednesday, February 25. They met every day of the week except on Fridays.

The hang-up apparently was a debate over those six counts where a mistrial is declared, related to the same female patient who returned for more dental visits after Anderson allegedly fondled her. Last Thursday, jurors asked for readback of her testimony, then requested transcripts of her testimony to review.

When asked by the judge for an example of their votes on the deadlocked counts, the jury foreman said the jury had a unanimous vote on one count the first time, but that the vote then split 10-to-2 later on.

The judge asked him not to indicate whether the majority vote favor guilt or innocence.

After the verdict, one victim Tanya McKay said while she was pleased with the guilty verdicts, she couldn't believe the judge would allow Anderson to remain a free man. "I want to know any other felon who's been convicted of 11-felonies and walked out of a courthouse before," said McKay, adding that Anderson counted on his patients trusting him as their dentist to get away with what he did.

Victim Candace Barajas said Anderson violated his trust and would have continued to do so. "It altered, I think, everybody's lives who were involved, including his family and it was all his doing. He put us all through this and he continued to smirk as he walked out of the courtroom," she said.

Anderson has been a prominent dentist in Woodland for years, until the California Dental Board revoked his license after the sexual allegations first surfaced in 2007.

The crimes came to light when Anderson fondled Barajas in the summer of 2007, who then reported his actions to Woodland police.

After that investigation, including a pretext phone call recorded between the patient and Anderson, police filed a single misdemeanor count. Within hours of the arrest becoming public, more women patients came forward and made similar allegations.

In October of 2007, a Yolo County Grand Jury then heard testimony from patients making the allegations. The Grand Jury then returned an indictment against Anderson of 20 felony counts and one misdemeanor alleging 14 victims. One of those felony counts was eventually dropped during the trial. Lawyers wouldn't comment about the reason for dropping that charge because a court-imposed gag order prohibited them from discussing the case.

The first glimpse of evidence against Anderson came during administrative hearings over his license to practice dentistry. In that hearing, the California Attorney General's office revealed copies of the transcript of the pretext telephone call, as well as written correspondence where Anderson apologized to one victim.

Anderson's defense in both the license hearing and the criminal case is that he was massaging patients to help ease their pain from a jaw

disorder called Temporomandibular Disorder, or TMD. Attorney Michael Rothschild argued the muscle massages were clumsy, but innocent attempts by the dentist to relieve his patients' pain.

Prosecutor Rob Gorman said the case came down to common sense. "There's no legitimate professional purpose for touching a female patient inside of her bra onto her breast with your hands. It's not dentistry. As this jury found, it's felony sexual battery under false pretenses."

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