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## Arkansas patient files civil suit against Paragould gynecologist charged with video voyeurism

By CHRISTINA HUYNH Associated Press

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LITTLE ROCK, Arkansas — A 23-year-old Arkansas woman has filed a lawsuit against a Paragould gynecologist who was charged this week with video voyeurism, alleging she caught the doctor taking nude photos of her during an examination this month, her lawyer said Friday.

State police have said investigators found numerous images of naked women — including the plaintiff — on Dr. Paul Becton's cellphone and that the photos appeared to have been taken in a doctor's office. Becton, 68, faces five counts of video voyeurism. He was arrested this week at a Newport motel and released Thursday evening after posting \$500,000 bail and surrendering his passport.

His lawyer did not return phone calls Friday.

The patient's lawyer, Brett McDaniel, said Friday that he didn't know whether other women would step forward to file their own complaints. The Associated Press typically does not identify people who are the apparent victims of sexual crimes.

"I certainly believe there are other women out there who have been violated," McDaniel said.

The patient's civil lawsuit alleges outrageous conduct and medical malpractice against Becton.

In April, a pre-operative examination appointment was set with Becton. The complaint states a nurse initially was in the examining room when a pap smear was performed on the woman. Both the nurse and Becton left the room when the patient undressed from her waist down. Becton returned to the room by himself and told her to lie down on the table.

While there is no Arkansas statute dictating a nurse must be present during a gynecological examination, unit administrator Linda Hutchinson for the Greene County Health Unit said having nurses in the examination room is "pretty much something that everyone's gone by. All the doctors, the practitioners."

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According to the complaint, the patient felt Becton's hand on her inner thigh while lying down, "in an unusual manner and position such that she had never experienced during any prior OB/GYN examination." The complaint says Becton asked the patient to stand up and turn around so he could examine her lower back and kidneys. She later saw in "the reflection of a glass frame on the wall Dr. Becton holding a cell phone horizontally behind her, apparently taking pictures."

When she turned around, she saw him "hurriedly place a cell phone in the pocket of his scrubs."

Hutchinson said Becton was the lone doctor in Greene County practicing in obstetrics and gynecology.

Arkansas Methodist Medical Center in Paragould announced Friday it will open a new women's clinic starting Monday to fill the gap in coverage for prenatal and post-delivery care. Hospital spokeswoman Shay Willis said Friday that the hospital had been exploring opening its own women's clinic over the past week.

Becton's private practice is housed in the Paragould hospital's office building.

If Becton is convicted on his felony charges, he could spend a maximum of 30 years in prison and face \$50,000 in fines. Prosecuting attorney Scott Ellington said Friday an investigation is ongoing and that more charges could be issued.

According to McDaniel, his client was fired from a Paragould nursing home, because they were doubtful of her reason for missing work after her April 1 appointment with Becton. But, he said, they have been receptive toward rehiring her.

"I have been in communications with them, and I believe they are open to rehiring her given what has come to light since she was let go," McDaniel said. "The story she initially told, I think they were skeptical of and I believe anybody would be, because it's hard to believe something like that would happen."

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