

JANUARY 2015

SETTLEMENT - CLARK COUNTY

CHRISTOPHER GRAF, CHRISTA GRAF, IAN WELLER, ELI WELLER, AND NATHANIEL GRAF v. STATE OF WASHINGTON, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

Number: 14-2-00649-1

Settlement Date: 10/3/14

Plff Atty: David P. Moody & Ian M. Bauer of Hagens Berman Sobol Shapiro (Seattle)

Def. Atty: Allison Croft, Edward Winskill & Amanda Bley, Office of the Attorney General (Tumwater)

Def. Exp.: Lauren Reba-Harrelson Ph.D. (Forensic Psychologist/Damages) Decatur GA; Park Dietz MD Ph.D. (Forensic Psychiatrist/Damages) Newport Beach CA; William Partin (Accountant/Damages) Bellevue

Mediator: Antonio Piazza (San Francisco CA)

Judge: Hon. Gregory Gonzales

STATE & DSHS NEGLIGENCE

MENTAL & PHYSICAL ABUSE; EMOTIONAL DISTRESS

Plffs, five children ranging in age from 12-19 at the time of settlement. Over a span of more than eight years, Def. DSHS received more than 60 warnings and more than 30 formal referrals of abuse and neglect in the home of Jeffrey and Sandra Weller - from teachers, neighbors, medical professionals, counselors, social services professionals, family members and the children in the home. The warnings were specific, detailed, and horrifying. Plffs contended Def. DSHS ignored many of these warnings and failed to conduct any meaningful investigation. On the rare occasion when DSHS took action, it was cursory. As a result, Plffs were left in the Weller household for years where they continued to suffer. On 10/7/11, law enforcement rescued Plffs from the home. They were the victims of nearly a decade of profound physical, mental and emotional abuse, neglect and starvation. They were regularly berated, tortured and forced to participate in the abuse of their siblings. The Def. refused to protect these five children from their abusive parents and turned a blind eye to their suffering. Their abusers were convicted of more than 23 counts of child abuse by a Clark County jury. They were each sentenced to more than 20 years in prison for their crimes.

Injuries: Physical, mental and emotional abuse. All five Plffs have suffered and will continue to suffer profound psychological difficulties due to the abuse they saw and experienced. Experts for the defense opined that each child would need no more than one year of therapy to fully recover from their victimization.

Result: PLAINTIFF SETTLEMENT for \$9,750,000, as to all Plffs.