

Jury awards \$3.41M to woman sexually abused by father

■ BY HEATH HAMACHER



Barker



Richardson

A Wake County jury has awarded \$3.41 million to a 23-year-old woman for sexual abuse she endured for nearly a decade.

Ian Richardson of Vann Attorneys and Daniel Barker of Barker Richardson, both in Raleigh, report that their client, Moriah Taylor, was repeatedly sexually abused by her father, David Taylor, from the time she was 8 years old until she reported the abuse to her bishop when she was 17. Her mother, Toby Taylor, knew about the abuse and did nothing to stop it, Richardson said.

Ordinarily, Lawyers Weekly does not divulge the names of victims of sexual abuse. But Richardson said that his client “wanted to shine a bright light on what happened, as she felt like when she was a child this was improperly swept under the rug by numerous people, including her mother.”

“I think, at least for our client, there was something powerful about facing this situation head-on,” Richardson said.

Court records show that David Taylor was convicted of attempted sexual battery in 2015, and Richardson said that David admitted to sexually abusing Moriah approximately five times, though Moriah claims she was abused “more times than she can count.”

The suit alleged negligence and negligent infliction of emotional distress by Toby Taylor. Richardson said that Toby admitted to knowing that when Moriah and some of her sisters (David and Toby have 11 children together, Richardson said) were younger, David would call them into his home office “to inspect their breasts.”

“Toby told [Child Protective Services] that she knew something was going on, but couldn’t put her finger on it,” Richardson said.

Richardson said that David served just a few days in jail after pleading guilty to the offenses, time meted out

only after he violated probation by contacting Moriah.

“Therefore, we asked a civil jury to hold both he and Toby Taylor accountable for what happened and impose a punishment consistent with the nature of the abuse,” Richardson said.

David and Toby represented themselves at trial. After a three-day trial, the jury deliberated about four hours, Richardson said, before finding them liable on Aug. 19 and awarding Moriah \$1,185,800 in actual damages and \$2,225,000 in punitive damages.

Nevertheless, Richardson said he considers it only “half-time” in the case, since David and Toby claim that they are too poor to pay the judgment.

“But we have evidence that they own cryptocurrency and substantial precious metals,” Richardson said. “So now we’re going to go focus on collecting.”

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VERDICT REPORT — SEXUAL ABUSE

Amount: \$3,410,800

Injuries alleged: Emotional distress and post-traumatic stress disorder

Case name: Moriah Taylor v. David and Toby Taylor

Court: Wake County Superior Court

Case No.: 18-CVS-12294

Judge: Graham Shirley

Date of verdict: Aug. 19

Demand: \$1 million

Highest offer: \$25,000

Attorneys for plaintiff: Daniel Barker of Barker Richardson and Ian Richardson of Vann Attorneys, both in Raleigh

Attorneys for defendants: None