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Civil Lawsuit Seeks \$7.85 Million in Damages from Alleged Child Molester

ROANOKE, Va. (Dec. 29, 2006) - A \$7.85 million civil lawsuit has been filed against New Castle, Va. restaurant owner Sidney Arnold Harry alleging sexual assault of a 15-year-old boy. The civil suit was filed Dec. 22 on behalf of the boy's family by Matthew W. Broughton and Greg Habeeb of Gentry Locke Rakes & Moore, Roanoke, Va., attorneys for the plaintiff, and co-counsel Jennifer Mulligan of Craig County.

According to Broughton, the boy's family filed the "John Doe" lawsuit requesting \$7.5 million in compensatory damages and \$350,000 in punitive damages to send a clear message that this type of behavior is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

"The lawsuit will give the citizens of Craig County the opportunity to stand up and punish Mr. Harry for his conduct against one of their neighbors and to compensate this young victim for the incredible damage done to him," said Broughton. "Money will never replace the loss of this child's innocence, but it is the best our system of justice can do to right this terrible wrong."

A criminal action had been filed by Commonwealth Attorney Thad Cox on Nov. 21 charging Harry with five misdemeanors and nine felonies, including taking indecent liberties with a minor and forcible sodomy.

Harry was arrested following a joint investigation by the Virginia State Police and the Craig County Sheriff's Office conducted over the past several months. No details were given on where the alleged offenses took place or how Harry and the boy were acquainted.

A trial of the misdemeanor charges as well as a preliminary hearing of the felony charges against Harry will be heard on Feb. 23.

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