

Deposition of Dr. Gina Toll

ROLAND PRINCE, Plaintiff v. PAUL WESTON, PH.D. Defendant

Q. Let's shift gears. Have you ever had a patient present as suicidal?

A. Yes. It's rare, but on occasion.

Q. And were they successful? Suicides, I mean.

A. No. They weren't.

Q. Congratulations. It must take great skill to recognize and negotiate that kind of crisis. What were the warning signs?

A. One of them -- it was a complete transformation. He went from a mop of unruly hair to well groomed. It was obvious to me. It didn't ring true. Most of them went to great lengths to put their affairs in order -- appeared upbeat...

Q. Like Alex.

A. I don't know. I wasn't in the room.

Q. But you talked to Dr. Weston about the case. What did he say?

A. We didn't talk much about the case until after Alex had died.

Q. So Paul waited until after Alex was dead to talk to you about the case?

A. All I know is that Paul was deeply affected by Alex's death, and that Paul is an engaged and compassionate therapist.

Q. You said he didn't mention this case. Waiting until a patient is dead to seek guidance from a supervisor doesn't sound engaged or compassionate, does it?

A. [Dr. Gina Toll sits in silence.]

Q. Wasn't there another patient in his care who complicated Alex and Dr. Weston's relationship -- a Laura Hill? Did Dr. Weston turn to you for advice on how to handle their entanglement?

A. Yes.

Q. And what was the nature of your advice?

A. We discussed how to maintain proper ethical boundaries, when two patients get involved with each other.

Q. Because it is messy?

A. It could be.

Q. Are you saying that Dr. Weston is a therapist who actually needs help in setting up basic boundaries with his patients?

A. It is something we have worked on -- helping Paul to establish proper boundaries in his practice.

Q. Isn't that what you therapists call counter-transference, when a therapist's own unconscious conflicts interfere with his ability to properly treat a patient?

A. Yes, that is the nature of a counter-transference. And I could see it happening between Alex and Paul. Paul was aware of the risks and was working to properly address the conflict.

Q. So, wait a minute, I'm confused, at first you said you didn't speak about Alex before his death, but now you say you helped Paul set boundaries with him throughout the course of his treatment.

Which is it, Dr. Toll?