

Planned Parenthood Body Parts Investigation Case Heads to Appeals Court

Liberty Counsel has filed an appeal to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals of the verdict in the multimillion-dollar civil lawsuit against Sandra Merritt for her undercover investigation of Planned Parenthood's trafficking of human baby body parts.

From the beginning, the court severely restricted the evidence, and at the end gave instructions to the jury that instructed them how they should rule on critical issues. The jury decided in favor of the abortion giant on each count, including RICO (Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations), and awarded more than \$2 million in damages.

The case was heard by San Francisco's U.S. District Court Judge William Orrick III, who is the founder of the Good Samaritan Family Resource Center that houses the Planned Parenthood of Northern California facility in its complex. In 2017, the defense requested that Orrick recuse himself from the case, and he refused.

Merritt and colleague David Daleiden, the founder of Center for Medical Progress (CMP), produced videos in 2015 exposing Planned Parenthood's illegal trade in aborted baby body parts after a 30-month undercover operation. The videos showed top-level Planned Parenthood executives haggling over prices of aborted baby body parts and discussing how they change abortion procedures to obtain more intact organs.

However, throughout the six-week trial, Judge Orrick specifically influenced the way the jury considered the issues and blocked them from watching the recorded conversations on the undercover videos. Orrick also told members of the jury

they couldn't look at this as a First Amendment case, where freedom of speech and the press could be considered as a defense.

However, Merritt and Daleiden acted according to the parameters of California recording law, and no other citizen journalist or journalism organization has ever been charged with a crime for undercover recordings made in the public interest.

Liberty Counsel's Chief Litigation Counsel Horatio Mihet said, "With the filing of this appeal, Sandra Merritt is one step closer to obtaining the justice that she was denied in the trial court. We are looking forward to the appeal and remain confident that Planned Parenthood's legal maneuvering and cover up for its misdeeds will ultimately fail." {eo}

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