

Transcript of the Testimony of

Kristin Vehrs

Date: 3/21/2022

[REDACTED] vs AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF ZOOLOGICAL PARKS AND AQUARIUMS INC.



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1 THE WITNESS: So let me say that, upon
2 further reflection and, you know, rereading my e-mail
3 responses, I -- I wish I would have handled the situation
4 differently.

5 Q. (By Ms. Hanley) In what way?

6 A. I wish I would have conducted an investigation;
7 that would have been the right thing to do.

8 Q. Why would that be the right thing to do?

9 A. Because that would show the seriousness of his
10 complaint, take -- take it -- taking -- taking it seriously
11 and that was -- it would have been taking -- it would have
12 been taking the complaint seriously, and it just plain and
13 simple the right thing to have done. I did not do it. That
14 is not something I'm proud of.

15 Q. And are you aware that ultimately, [REDACTED] also
16 reported his concern to the Seattle police?

17 A. Only via the complaint.

18 Q. Are you aware that later, the Seattle city
19 prosecutor saw enough seriousness in [REDACTED] complaint
20 that they pressed criminal charges against Ms. Schwartz
21 [sic]?

22 A. I was not, no.

23 Q. I mean Schwetz?

24 A. No.

25 MR. MACARIO: Object to the form.

1 Q. So is it fair to assume that, although later,
2 Seattle legal authorities thought it was a criminal nature
3 at the time, you did not?

4 MR. MACARIO: Object to the form.

5 MR. STONE: Yeah, objection to form.

6 THE WITNESS: Again, I -- I do not recall any
7 of the discussion about whether or not we thought this --
8 this complaint was of a criminal nature or not.

9 Q. (By Ms. Hanley) Well, if it was not of criminal
10 nature, then it says -- I mean mandatory, "The AZA staff
11 receiving the report will gather information from the
12 victims and discuss next steps," right?

13 A. Right.

14 Q. And so did AZA discuss next steps or gather
15 information, do any of these things for [REDACTED]

16 A. No.

17 Q. Then it goes on to say -- so essentially, the AZA
18 did not follow its own policies here regarding the handling
19 of [REDACTED] complaint of sexual harassment, correct?

20 A. Correct, and that is why I stated earlier that I
21 wish I would have handled this differently and I would have
22 invest- -- I should have investigated and I'm not proud of
23 this.

24 Q. So then it says, "If a person is found to have been
25 harassed by another person, any of the following may take

1 Ms. Schwetz had never been at this AZA-sponsored event,
2 [REDACTED] would not have been sexually harassed and
3 assaulted, right?

4 MR. MACARIO: Object to form.

5 MR. STONE: Objection to form.

6 THE WITNESS: Not -- certainly not by -- yes.

7 Q. (By Ms. Hanley) So, I mean, when we talk about
8 sexual harassment, while it is complex, would it be fair to
9 say, as you sit here today, that it is clear AZA does have
10 some tools to protect members from sexual harassment and
11 retaliation?

12 A. Yes. It can issue the verbal or written warnings
13 or suspend attendance at sponsored events or prohibit
14 attendance at future event -- meetings.

15 Q. And yet it exercised none of those to protect
16 [REDACTED] right?

17 A. Correct.

18 Q. So if, let's say that what had been reported to you
19 in -- by -- in September 2018 had been, instead of
20 Ms. Schwetz, a woman unwanted -- doing unwanted touching of
21 a male or males, it had been a man -- a male AZA member at
22 the bar who had been reported engaging in unwanted touching
23 of multiple women, okay?

24 A. Okay.

25 Q. And so let's say that after -- so this is reported

1 to you, a man has engaged in unwanted touching of multiple
2 women, and then that same man goes to a hotel room and
3 engages in what is alleged to be sexual assault, okay?

4 A. Okay.

5 Q. And the woman sexually assaulted complains to you;
6 would you investigate?

7 MR. STONE: Objection to the form of the
8 question.

9 THE WITNESS: I would, but I would
10 immediately tell this woman to go talk to the police and the
11 hotel facility.

12 Q. (By Ms. Hanley) Now -- so that's what you would
13 have done in September of 2018 as well?

14 A. Again, it's hard for me to speculate, but because
15 it didn't happen that way, and I didn't know that in 2018,
16 but yes, I would have -- I would have informed the woman in
17 your example to go talk to the police, go report it to the
18 hotel, and we would have conducted an investigation.

19 Q. Would you have told the woman to, in the future,
20 just simply avoid being in the same place alone as the man?

21 MR. STONE: Object to the form.

22 THE WITNESS: I would have told the woman
23 that in addition to these other things, avoid being in a
24 place alone in a hotel room.

25 Q. (By Ms. Hanley) So turning back to Exhibit