

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

GIRL SUES '89 LOTTERY WINNER IN SEX CASE SHE WAS 6 WHEN ATTACKED

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A girl who was 6 when she was sodomized in 1992 has sued her attacker in St. Louis County Circuit Court for actual and punitive damages.

The defendant, Thomas Bisso, should have ample funds to pay any judgment against him, says the girl's attorney, **Bret Rich** of Clayton. Bisso won \$2.7 million in 1989 in Missouri's Lotto game.

A summons was issued Monday to Bisso, 49, of Maplewood, to respond to the allegations in the suit.

The suit, filed Friday, identifies the victim only by her initials and allows her mother to proceed in her behalf. The suit says Bisso's sexual assault greatly interferes with the girl's "ability to enjoy life and will in the future interfere with her ability to enjoy life."

The petition seeks actual damages in excess of \$25,000 and unspecified punitive damages. Bisso's "intentional offensive contact with the plaintiff was outrageous because of defendant's evil motive or reckless indifference to the rights of others," the suit said.

Rich said Monday that the girl is 12 and a seventh-grader who lives with her family in Franklin County. She needs extensive counseling, Rich said.

Bisso was charged with sodomy on March 11, 1994. He pleaded guilty on Nov. 18 of that year, and spent 120 days at the Sexual Offender's Assessment Unit at the prison in Farmington before being placed on three-years probation in May 1995.

At the sentencing, Judge Robert L. Campbell asked Bisso: "Between Oct. 1, 1992 and Nov. 25, 1992, did you have deviate sexual intercourse with M.W.?"

Bisso replied affirmatively. Court records indicate he has successfully completed his probationary period.

The judge ordered Bisso to pay restitution to the victim for counseling but that never happened, Rich said. The family didn't know how to seek restitution, Rich said, and Bisso's probation officer never contacted them.

The girl underwent counseling at school and through the Division of Family Services. She also had a few sessions with a private counselor; the family couldn't afford more, Rich said.

"He (Bisso) ended up getting one hell of a deal," Rich said. The lawyer added he has checked with the Missouri Lottery and learned that Bisso's \$2.7 million in winnings are being paid over a 20-year period.

Bisso has no local telephone listing. He could not be reached for comment.

Caption:

Correction:

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