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Tuesday, August 19, 2014 Last Update: 10:12 AM PT

The Worst Doctor in the World?

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YANKTON, S.D. (CN) - After starting his medical career by lying about a felony conviction, things only got worse, a spinal surgeon's former office manager, who also was his patient, claims in one of 28 malpractice lawsuits filed against Dr. Allen Sossan in the past 20 months.

The office manager, Laurie Strate, sued Allen A. Sossan aka Alan A. Soosan aka Allen A. Soosan, in Yankton County Court. She also sued Reconstructive Spinal Surgery and Orthopedic Surgery P.C., and Lewis & Clark Specialty Hospital.



The other 27 complaints make similar allegations.

Sossan, who was born in Iran, "started his medical career by lying about a felony conviction in an attempt to fraudulently obtain a license to practice medicine," Strate says on page 2 of the 36-page lawsuit.

Among other things, Strate claims: "When Sossan had a particular interest in buying something expensive he would push to schedule more procedures and surgeries. For example, Sossan liked fancy cars and one day brought in a picture of a foreign sports car that cost over \$200,000. He told the staff to call all the patients who had surgery in the last 6 months to come in so that he could schedule new surgeries to make the money to buy a car.

"Sossan told staff to specifically focus on patients who recently had posterior lumbar fusion surgery so that he could schedule another high-paying anterior lumbar surgery."

Strate claims that "Sossan admitted to plaintiff that both surgeries can be done at the same time and other surgeons do both posterior and anterior at the same time, but Sossan scheduled two separate surgeries to make more money."

The plaintiffs in the dozens of lawsuits range in age from their early twenties to their eighties. All of them claim in their lawsuits that Sossan persuaded them to undergo dangerous and unnecessary spinal or neck surgeries.

In one complaint, an 80-year-old woman claims Sossan promised her surgery would allow her to walk without her cane. But she suffered a stroke during the surgery, followed by constant headaches, then needed to use a walker afterward.

Among the defendants in the lawsuits are hospitals that granted Sossan operating privileges, including Lewis & Clark Specialty Hospital and Avera Sacred Heart Hospital, both in Yankton, S.D., and Sossan's own practice, Reconstructive Spinal Surgery and Orthopedic Surgery in Norfolk, Neb.

The Yankton hospitals hired Sossan even though the National Practitioners Data Bank cited incidences in which other hospitals had denied him privileges, which the Yankton hospitals should have investigated, the complaints said.

In a March 23 article this year, the South Dakota newspaper "The Argus Leader" published a long investigative story on Sossan, under the headline "Secrecy Protects Surgeon's Trail of Pain."

The article quoted Daniel Wik, a pain-management doctor from Nebraska, stating that Sossan "has a lot of blood on his hands."

According to the lawsuit, Sossan changed his name from Alan Soosan to get into medical school despite a felony for burglarizing St. Petersburg Junior College in Florida to get answers to a biology test.

Strate's lengthy lawsuit also describes complaints of sexual misconduct. She claims, for instance, that she tried to book a hotel room for Sossan and "the hotel refused to take the reservation, stating that Sossan had been seen having sex with a woman in a public area of the hotel and that Sossan was no longer welcome at the hotel."

Sossan sexually harassed her in the office, Strate claims, and gives a graphic example.

In November 2013, a Yankton County jury found Sossan guilty of medical malpractice and awarded a patient \$933,835 in damages, according to a Nov. 20, 2013 article in the Yankton Daily newspaper.

The Argus Leader newspaper reported in March that Sossan has returned to Iran.

A message sent to his email address Monday bounced back.

All of the plaintiffs are represented by Timothy James, of Yankton, who declined comment, due to a gag order.

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