

ACCUSED DRUG PROGRAM DIRECTOR EXPECTED TO TESTIFY

Lexington Herald-Leader (KY) - August 29, 1985

- Author/Byline: Thomas Tolliver Herald-Leader staff writer
- Edition: FINAL
- Section: CITY/STATE
- Page: B2

After six days of silently listening to both criticism and praise, Possibilities Unlimited director George Ross is expected to take the stand today to rebut charges that he held young people in the drug rehabilitation program against their will.

Ross, who founded the Lexington drug program two years ago, is being tried in Fayette District Court on three counts of unlawful imprisonment, a misdemeanor punishable by up to 12 months in jail and a \$500 fine.

Lexington attorney Larry Roberts, one of the attorneys representing Ross, told Judge John Adams yesterday that Ross would be his first witness this morning. Roberts said he also planned to call two or three character witnesses before resting his case.

The jury, however, apparently won't get the case until Friday. Prosecutors said yesterday that they planned to call four or five rebuttal witnesses.

Since it will likely be midafternoon before testimony ends, Adams said he would prefer to delay closing arguments until Friday.

Also yesterday, the fathers of two young people, both of whom have accused Ross of unlawfully holding them in the program, testified that they never saw Ross restrain their children from leaving Possibilities Unlimited.

The two fathers were among 13 defense witnesses to take the stand yesterday. Other witnesses included two Lexington police officers, and several parents of current and former clients in the drug-treatment program.

The charges against Ross stem from criminal complaints filed by ██████ Hodgins, 23, of Lexington, and ██████ Mullins and ██████ Smalley, both 19 and of Frankfort. All three contend that Ross used physical or psychological restraint to keep them in the program against their will.

██████ Hodgins, the father of ██████ Hodgins, said he never saw Ross restrain his daughter or anyone else in the program.

Ms. Hodgins testified last week that Ross threatened to have her 2-year-old daughter taken away from her if she left the program. However, ██████ Hodgins said Ross was merely reinforcing a condition he and his wife had put on their daughter.

Hodgins also said Ross had his consent to tell ██████ that her parents would seek a court order putting her into the program if she did not voluntarily enroll.

"We were willing to go to whatever legal means we had to do that," Hodgins testified.

Also testifying yesterday was ██████ Mullins, the father of ██████ Mullins. The younger Mullins contends that he was held unlawfully in the program from Feb. 24 to April 7.

Mullins had entered the program in October 1984 and was visiting his family on Feb. 24 when he became involved in a fight with his father.

██████ Mullins testified earlier that shortly after the fight, three staff members from Possibilities Unlimited appeared at the Mullins home and physically picked him up, carried him to a car and transported him back to the Possibilities Unlimited headquarters at 2628 Wilhite Drive.

During his testimony yesterday, ██████ Mullins said he "begged" the Possibilities Unlimited employees to take his son back to Lexington.

Earlier this week, Roberts, in asking Adams to dismiss ██████ Mullins' complaint against Ross, argued that Ross had nothing to do with the three staff members physically returning Mullins to the program.

In another effort to show that Mullins was not being held against his will, Roberts called to the stand two Lexington police officers - Lt. John Bizzack and detective Pat Taylor - both of whom interviewed ██████ Mullins shortly after the incident.

Both officers said that they told Mullins that he could leave the Possibilities Unlimited headquarters with them but that he chose to stay.

- Record: 8502020491
- Copyright: Copyright (c) 1985 Lexington Herald-Leader