

Headline Trial opens for HIV positive airman
Date 20 Jan 2011
MediaTitle Daily Express (KK)
Section World
Journalist N/A
Frequency Daily (EM)
Circ / Read 30,557 / 97,836

Language English
Page No 13
Article Size 152 cm²
Color Black/white
ADValue 313
PRValue 940



Trial opens for HIV-positive airman

WICHITA (Kansas): Women took the stand Tuesday in a court martial case against an airman accused of having sex without telling them he was HIV positive.

The women, who met Air Force Sergeant David Gutierrez through adult "friend-finding" websites, testified that he never told them he tested positive for HIV.

"Absolutely not," one woman replied to questioning from a military prosecutor on whether she would have had sex with Gutierrez had she known he was HIV positive.

Gutierrez faces 10 counts of aggravated assault in the case, along with nine counts of adultery, one count of an indecent act and one count of violating an order from a superior officer that he tell potential sex partners about his HIV status.

He faces a dishonourable discharge and more than 50 years in prison if convicted.

While charges have been brought against civilians accused of exposing people to the HIV virus, a public affairs officer at McConnell Air Force Base where the court martial is taking place said he was unaware of similar proceedings against military personnel.

In opening statements, prosecutors said Gutierrez could have been in contact with as many as 500 people who sought

casual sex partners through the Internet.

The women who testified Tuesday said they have been tested and are free of the HIV virus.

Prosecutors are expected to wrap up their case after presenting an additional witness Wednesday.

Though Gutierrez is charged with adultery, witnesses said his wife was a willing participant in spouse-swapping parties.

A North Carolina woman testified she and her husband met Gutierrez and his wife through an "adult friend finder" website while they were in Kansas building a restaurant.

The couples agreed to a "meet and greet" at a bar on the outskirts of Wichita, she said, adding that the couple then invited Gutierrez and his wife to their hotel room for sex with each others' spouses. "It was a full swap," she said.

Gutierrez wore a condom during sex, she pointed out. The evening ended "on nice terms," she said, adding that Gutierrez and his wife "were nice people" but that they never met again.

Another witness testified she accompanied Gutierrez to two swingers events on the same day in November 2009, one at a barbecue and another at a "toga party" held in a hotel room. — AFP