



Posted on: Friday, January 28, 2005

Families of Uyesugi victims in confidential settlement of lawsuit

By [Ken Kobayashi](#)

Advertiser Court Writer

A confidential out-of-court settlement was reached this week to end the massive and complex lawsuit by relatives of seven Xerox employees shot and killed by co-worker Byran Uyesugi.

The families sued Xerox and its managers, as well as health-care institutions and mental health experts who had evaluated and treated Uyesugi before the shooting at Xerox's Nimitz Highway warehouse Nov. 2, 1999. The suits alleged that not enough was done to prevent the state's worst mass murder.

The civil trial over whether any of them are liable for the deaths was scheduled to start next month, but the lawyers met with Circuit Judge Eden Hifo this week and formally notified her of the settlement. The lawyers pledged not to discuss the case or disclose the terms of the settlement.

Those reached yesterday declined to comment.

Uyesugi, 44, is serving a life prison term without parole for the first-degree murder conviction for the shootings. He had been diagnosed as suffering from a delusional disorder, but the jury rejected his insanity defense and convicted him of murdering the seven men.

The lawsuits were on behalf of relatives of Jason Balatico, 33, of Kalihi Valley; Ford Kanehira, 41, of Kane'ohe; Ronald Kataoka, 50, of Mililani; Ronald Kawamae, 54, of Makiki; Melvin W.T. Lee, 58, of Waipi'o Gentry; Peter Mark, 46, of Hawai'i Kai; and John Sakamoto, 36, of Hawai'i Kai.

The civil case also included lawsuits by Randall Shin, a Xerox employee who was in the same room when two co-workers were shot, and George Moad, an employee of Hawaii Transfer Co., who discovered the bodies.

The suits were against Uyesugi; Xerox Corp.; five Xerox managers; Crisis Management International Inc.; Castle Medical Center; psychiatrists Denis Mee-Lee and Marvin Mathews; psychologist Marvin Acklin; and Kaiser Foundation Hospitals and Hawaii Permanente Medical Group Inc., which make up Kaiser Permanente.

Reach Ken Kobayashi at kkobayashi@honoluluadvertiser.com or 525-8030.

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