



TOP STORIES

HRA faces rape lawsuit

10:39 AM CDT on Friday, July 13, 2007

By Scott E. Williams / The Daily News

TEXAS CITY — A woman and her daughter are suing an assisted-living center, charging that it mishandled reports that a mentally disabled woman had been repeatedly raped there.

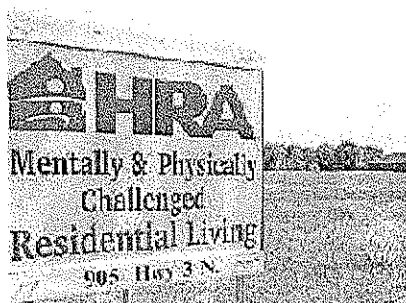


Photo by Kevin M. Cox

The HRA Village, an assisted living facility for the mentally and physically challenged in Texas City, is facing a lawsuit from a former resident. The lawsuit claims that the mentally retarded resident was raped and sodomized by a worker there.

HRA Village, 905 state Highway 3 N., is a facility offering assisted living in a family setting to adults with mild physical or mental handicaps.

The lawsuit claims that a 28-year-old mentally retarded resident was raped and sodomized by a worker there last year.

In March, a grand jury indicted Texas City resident Henry Lewis Jones, 53, with sexual assault in an alleged July 4, 2006, attack against the woman. The charge carries a possible prison term of two to 20 years.

The suit also claims that, when the victim reported the attack to officials at the center, she received

threats, not help.

“The house manager stated that, ‘If (the reported victim) is lying, then this is her last day at HRA Village,’” the lawsuit states.

The lawsuit contends that, while the woman was undergoing an examination at a Galveston hospital to determine if the attack had occurred, center officials were working to kick her out of the facility.

It also claims the center placed Jones on administrative leave but did not fire him.

Michael Johnson, president of the board of HRA Village, said he could not comment on the suit because he had not yet been served with a copy of it.

He did say that Jones had not been employed at the village for more than a year, but he could not discuss whether the employee’s departure had any connection to the allegations in the civil or criminal cases.

State law limits lawsuit liability to \$500,000 when defendants are charities, a category under which HRA Village falls, except in cases of willful misconduct or extreme recklessness.

Plaintiffs’ attorney Anthony Buzbee said he would be seeking to exceed the standard cap.

“When they not only don’t do anything about it but accuse and threaten the victim, I think that qualifies,” he said.

The woman at the center of the case now lives in an assisted-living center in Pasadena.