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FORMER PATIENT SETTLES MEMORY IMPLANT LAWSUIT
By: Greg Saitz
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STUART - A Jensen Beach woman who sued her psychiatrist, claiming he implanted false memories of satanic ritual abuse during therapy, has agreed to a \$ 650,000 settlement, according to a court document filed Monday.

An attorney for Sue Tinker filed a letter Monday saying his client and Dr. Alan Tesson of Stuart agreed to the settlement. No details of the settlement were included in the letter, but Tinker's attorney, Don Russo, confirmed the settlement amount.

"Certainly it's the highest settlement of a case like this in Florida thus far," Russo said.

Tinker filed the case last year, alleging Tesson used hypnosis to implant "repressed" memories of abuse by her parents that never happened, and that he engaged in an affair with Tinker when he treated her. Russo described Tesson as someone who was preoccupied with satanic ritual abuse and thought it was occurring in Martin County.

"I personally feel Dr. Tesson kept me uninformed, misled me and pushed me to go in directions he wished to go," Tinker wrote in court documents. "Also, he used me for his personal purposes."

Tesson's attorneys countered that the psychiatrist only treated the symptoms Tinker presented to him during her 21/2 years of therapy, which began in 1991. His attorneys have fought to keep Tesson's personal beliefs out of trial, saying those beliefs are irrelevant to his treatment of Tinker.

Tesson has not said he believes in satanic ritual abuse. But Tesson treated many children involved in the Glendale Montessori abuse case and has sat on panels discussing satanic abuse.

In the Glendale case, dozens of children said school officials sexually abused and terrorized them.

"Tesson had such lack of credibility," Russo said. "He took the position in the community that he had nothing to do with promoting the idea of satanic ritual abuse when the community, including ex-patients, knew he promoted the heck out of it."

Attorneys for Tesson's insurance company could not be reached to comment. His personal attorney, Richard Kibbey, said Monday night he was unaware of a final settlement, although he said discussions had been ongoing.

Tesson could not be reached to comment Monday.

The issue of the validity of repressed memories has been debated in criminal cases, but a patient suing a therapist for bringing out memories that didn't happen is fairly new. Russo said Tinker never needed to see a therapist.