

Court rules against white supremacists

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (AP) — The Illinois Supreme Court dealt a legal blow to a white supremacist on Wednesday, upholding a state law that requires charities to register and report their finances to the government.

The court rejected Matt Hale's argument that the law is unconstitutionally vague.

Illinois Attorney General Jim Ryan sued Hale's World Church of the Creator in 1999 for failing to register as a charity and disclose its finances.

The lawsuit was filed just days after former member Benjamin Smith went on a shooting rampage that targeted minorities. Smith killed two people and injured nine before killing himself.

Ryan is trying to fine the East Peoria-based racist group \$1,000, freeze its assets and ban it from soliciting funds in Illinois.

Ryan contends Hale's organization is a charity, not a church. Illinois requires charities to register so it can protect people from fraudulent fund raising, while the First Amendment keeps government's hands off churches.

Hale argued that the law is so vague no one can tell which groups it covers. A Cook County circuit judge agreed and overturned the law.

The Supreme Court's unanimous decision, which sends the case back to the

lower court, said the state's Solicitation Act describes "charitable organizations" as being formed for "benevolent, philanthropic, patriotic," or other purposes.

"Although the terms at issue in this case are broad in scope, we fail to see how they could be more precisely defined," wrote Justice Rita Garman.

Hale had claimed Ryan was using the law to shut down his organization because of Smith's crimes. He has contended that while his group preaches white supremacy, he did not encourage Smith to kill minorities.

After Wednesday's decision, Hale said Ryan, a Republican candidate for governor, was trying to score political points.

"We are a body of religious adherents. We raise money in order to print our literature and distribute it," Hale said. "We have a collection plate, just as most churches, and I don't see them being hauled into court by Jim Ryan."

However, Hale based his lawsuit on the constitutional vagueness question.

Ryan argued that Hale's group qualifies as a charity because it sells items such as "The White Man's Bible."

Garman said the group's solicitation on a Web site for membership dues and advertisements for books and merchandise gave "the appearance of a charitable organization."

Disaster

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mine from Washington that knew I was coming out here said, 'why don't you put a team together in Nevada?'" She undertook the herculean challenge, ironically, in 1998. "One of my tasks was that I had to find a Medical Commander," she said. With a list of prominent names recommended to her, Newell says, "I went to each one, and was essentially laughed at and told that I would never get this off the ground. There was no need for it." On September 11, she seemed clairvoyant.

A trauma nurse, Newell worked with Tate at UMC. She considered him "an extraordinary man" and, early on, had considered approaching him. Asked whether he'd been one of the esteemed doctors so highly recommended at the outset, she said, "Absolutely not." Finally, Newell asked Tate if he would become Nevada's DMAT Medical Commander and he told her he'd "be honored."

Tate considers the team to be unique in a number of ways, and in some, the word "unique" isn't adequate.

"To even start this process," he explained, "there has to be a medical group that's willing to be the primary sponsor. The medical group that 'stepped to the plate'—with encouragement from its president" (which happens to be Tate)—"was the West-Creat Medical Society," he said, "which is the local branch of the National Medical Association," and also happens to be the African-American professional society.

"It's not only a black Medical Commander, but it's a black medical group as the primary sponsor. So it's unique from that perspective," said Tate. "It's the first time that a black organization has headed it, and I believe I'm the only black medical commander in the country," he said, "Hopefully I'm not the last

one."

Getting the media's attention has also been a problem. "We have had one other contact (besides the *Sentinel-Voice*)," said Newell, "and I have a phone call from a (local TV) news station wanting an interview. I've called several times, my husband has called, saying we'd be glad to, but we have yet to get a phone call back from them." That's been it, as of last Monday. "We are still recruiting," Newell said, noting 150 "extraordinary people" are already aboard "We've also been up to Reno and talked to Washoe County."

"We got a tremendous response up in Washoe County," Tate said about their visit two months ago. "They were just ready to go."

"We're going to have two divisions of the team. If something occurred up in that area, they would have the ability to start the process quickly," giving Nevada I DMAT "complete coverage of the state. No other team has really done that in the United States, we're kind of setting a precedent here with that whole idea," said Newell.

Said Tate, "Everyone has the same opportunity to step to the plate, even now."

"What we have been trying to do for the past three weeks is to simply get on the agenda for the city council and county commission. We've also written to the congressional delegation," Tate continued, "and all we're asking for is a little bit of their time, nothing else."

"I never gave up, because I believed in the mission and I believed in the dream," Newell said, "and I knew there was a need."

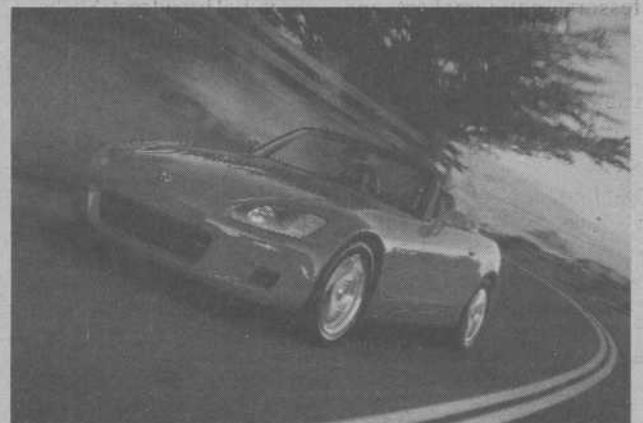
Said Tate, praising one of the aforementioned extraordinary people, "If it weren't for Nancy, there wouldn't have been a team, period."



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