

Documents detail actions of man accused of stalking

By **BRYON OKADA**

Star-Telegram staff writer

FORT WORTH -- *I want you to be my little beautiful puppet.*

Threats came at her like a battering ram, spoken in a voice like the growl of Karl in the movie *Sling Blade*.

Lewd, violent threats.

Elaborate descriptions of how he would mutilate her body.

And the depraved calls continued. Words and phrases including "rape," "hot curling irons" and "rope around your neck" were used.

And then the profanity-laced calls got even worse, according to federal court documents from a lawsuit involving a stalking case that concluded last week. Beginning in February 2001, threats followed American Airlines flight attendant Jamie Abrams through the terminals at Dallas/Fort Worth Airport, in hotel rooms, at home. Somehow, he knew where she would be. He knew her work schedule, her private travel information. And then Abrams' husband, Darren, and her friends started getting calls.

"I'm gonna get her!" the voice screamed. *"I'm gonna get her! She's all mine. She's all mine!"*

The longer it went on, the worse it got. Dave Caddoo, Darren Abrams' friend and co-worker at American, became a side target for threats.

Then one night, Abrams returned home to find that a brick had been thrown through a window.

On July 20, 2001, Abrams went with co-workers to Gator's in Bedford. She had one drink, felt woozy and sick, and went home. The next morning the call came: *"Feeling a little dizzy? The next time you won't be able to walk."*

Two cellphones

Around this time Abrams, 43, of Fort Worth, and her husband began to suspect that the person behind all of it was a co-worker in American Airlines fleet service named Tim White.

Co-workers told Abrams that White often affected the voice of Billy Bob Thornton's character, Karl, from *Sling Blade* and frequently used the term "sky whore" -- a term White used with Abrams. He would carry two cellphones: one for his family, the other for his "experiments," Abrams testified.

At one point, Abrams asked the caller why he was targeting her. He said that one day he had said hello to her at the airport. She was very nice. Then on another occasion, he said hello to her and she ignored him.

Abrams tried to track the calls, which persisted and seemed to be coming from somewhere at D/FW. Details in the calls would indicate that Abrams was being

watched as she passed through the terminals. At one point, the voice boasted that he could find her anywhere because a friend in crew scheduling was passing information to him. He was apparently using American Airlines' resources to stalk her more effectively.

The D/FW Department of Public Safety made inquiries. Corporate security was brought in, but Abrams says that was ineffectual.

By summer of 2002, the voice was no longer threatening just Abrams; her son was a target, too.

"We tried to hide it from him," Darren Abrams said. But the boy eventually figured out what was going on.

The FBI Violent Crimes Squad got involved.

But the calls persisted day and night -- and a year went by. If Abrams changed her phone number, the calls would start again as soon as the employee files at American were updated.

In 2003, the passenger side window of Darren Abrams' truck was shot out while he drove on Airport Freeway. Around that time, stick-on notes began appearing on the front porch: "Sky whore" scrawled in red nail polish.

Man is arrested

After many interviews with White's co-workers -- and after a "terroristic threat" made against a D/FW police officer looking into harassing phone calls made from the Terminal C19 gatehouse -- White was arrested in May 2003 by airport police at Terminal C, Gate 23, for harassing Jamie Abrams. Later that year, airport police filed two cases of stalking against White, according to state court records.

The FBI secured a confession from White, who failed a polygraph test. White wrote in his confession, provided to the *Star-Telegram* by Abrams' attorney: "I admit I made harassing and threatening phone calls to David Caddoo and Jamie Abrams. These calls began on February 2001 and continued into 2003. I trust no one and I am angry -- everyone looks down on me. Most calls were made from the American Airlines terminal. I'm moving away and will stop making the calls in the future. I'm sorry for my actions."

American Airlines terminated White's employment Nov. 6, 2003, because he repeatedly called in sick to avoid talking to human resources. Two and a half years had passed since the first threatening call.

In December 2004, Abrams sued in federal court, alleging a hostile work environment and gender discrimination against American Airlines, emotional distress against American, American corporate security head Henry Moore and White, and slander against White.

On April 18, 2005, White, 43, reached a plea agreement with Tarrant County prosecutors and pleaded guilty to one charge of stalking. In exchange, he was sentenced to 10 years' deferred adjudication probation. As part of the plea agreement, prosecutors agreed not to prosecute White on the second charge of

stalking. Deferred adjudication probation means that if White completes the terms of his probation, there will be no finding of guilt, and a conviction can be expunged from his record. If he violates the terms of his probation, he could go to prison. One of the conditions of his probation is to have no contact with Jamie Abrams.

In October 2005, U.S. District Judge Terry Means granted Abrams' motion for default judgment against White on the slander claim but postponed the judgment damages until the other claims were dealt with.

On Aug. 30, Means granted American's motion for summary judgment on the other claims, writing that too much time had passed between the incidents and Abrams' filing of the claims.

Also, American had investigated and did not treat her claims differently from similar claims made by male counterparts.

What had begun as a lawsuit involving a major airline had become the awarding of damages against the actions of a single man with no deep pockets.

Calls start again

Two weeks ago, with the hearing coming up, the calls began again.

On Thursday, Abrams' attorney, Raul H. Loya, played answering machine recordings for Means, who listened as the scratchy voice growled menacing threats. Jamie and Darren Abrams testified that the voice was White's.

An attorney for American Airlines did not question the witnesses and presented no evidence in White's defense.

In the default judgment against White, Means awarded Abrams \$600,000 in lost wages, \$5 million for pain and suffering, and \$10 million for punitive damages: \$15.6 million. It is unlikely that White can pay such an amount so the figure is "mostly symbolic," Means said.

More significantly, however, Means also handed out a permanent injunction against White forbidding all contact with Abrams and her family. Also, he is not to come within 100 yards of Abrams. A violation could land White in prison.

After the hearing, Jamie and Darren Abrams said they believe that American Airlines did not do enough to protect Jamie Abrams, despite Means' summary judgment ruling. They said they plan to appeal Means' ruling dismissing the claims against American. In the meantime, Jamie Abrams said, she hopes that the injunction will have some effect on the harassing calls.

Darren Abrams still works for American.

White is believed to be living in Tennessee.

Jamie Abrams has been grounded for medical reasons.

According to a medical record included in court documents: "Since her traumatic experience occurred at the airport and the perpetrator demonstrated his ability to

find out what flight she'd be on and was contacting her up til the last day she flew, she would likely experience an increase in her panic and anxiety. This would lead to a rapid decline in her ability to function in any part of her life."

The couple say they have had marital problems. Jamie Abrams says she has gained 40 pounds and continues to take multiple medications for depression and anxiety. "There are wrongs in our society we have found difficult to address within the bounds of our Constitution," Means told Darren Abrams during one emotional outburst Thursday.

"What we're left with is the rage you're feeling now," Means said. Staff writer Melody McDonald contributed to this report.

okada@star-telegram.com

BRYON OKADA, 817-390-7752