

Crime AUGUST 3, 2015

Killer pushes forward with suit against victim's widow after state Supreme Court strikes down law

BY ALEXIS KRELL

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A woman sued by her husband's killer has a court hearing again Friday, after the law protecting her from the suit was ruled unconstitutional earlier this year.

Paula Henry's husband, Robert, was fatally shot by Larry Shandola in Tacoma on Sept. 11, 1995, a conviction for which Shandola is serving a 31-year prison sentence.

From behind bars he served his victim's wife with the suit in 2013, because she and several others told the state Department of Corrections that Shandola shouldn't be allowed to serve his sentence in Canada, where he was born and where he'd be closer to his family.

He alleges she violated his privacy rights and meant to emotionally distress him.

Pierce County Superior Court Judge Garold Johnson agreed to dismiss the action in 2013 as a "Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation," which meant it violated state law that prevented frivolous lawsuits meant to silence free expression.

However, the Washington Supreme Court declared that law unconstitutional in May in an unrelated case, unanimously saying that the law violated the right to trial by jury, by requiring judges instead to make decisions about disputed facts in a case.

Henry's attorney, John Ladenburg Sr., said in a release Monday that Shandola immediately filed a motion after that ruling to have the dismissal of his suit vacated, so that he can continue with it.

That motion will be heard at 9 a.m. Friday in Pierce County Superior Court.

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