

Patient 'shocked' when Georgetown doctor showed naked photos of himself

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"Now you know more about me than most of my patients."

These were the last words spoken in person by Georgetown family physician Dr. Nigel Mark Phipps to Patient A as she fled his office after he showed her photos of himself naked, the woman testified Monday.

The patient, whose identity is covered by a publication ban, is one of eight, along with three female employees, who are part of the discipline case against Phipps at the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario. All say they were shown naked or seminaked photos of the doctor, who has been practising since 1985.

At the first day of his discipline hearing Monday, the five-member discipline panel heard that Phipps will admit to showing four photos of himself in various stages of undress to patients and staff and that his conduct was disgraceful, dishonourable or unprofessional. He denies the college allegation that his conduct would be considered sexual abuse of patients.

College lawyer Elisabeth Widner told the panel the photos - "selfies, as they are termed" - are as follows: one where he's naked with his penis visible, one of Phipps' naked buttocks, one where he's naked from the groin up, but where the genitals are not visible, and a fourth



Bernard Weil/Toronto Star

Patients and employees of Dr. Nigel Mark Phipps say the doctor showed them naked or semi-naked photos of himself.

showing him naked with a towel over his arm.

The first three photos were attached to an agreed statement of facts describing them. Phipps admitted he deleted the fourth photo from his cellphone.

One photo that Patient B said she saw brought to mind an image of the band Red Hot Chili Peppers, famous for performing naked with nothing but socks covering their penises. But upon further reflection, said Patient B, who also testified Monday, it's possible the

doctor was naked in the photo, and that she got the image conflated because he may have been wearing black socks on his feet.

Widner said Phipps would typically show the photos to the women while recounting "a supposedly amusing story" about going on a golf trip with his friends and how they had come across the photos on his phone, which he had said were meant as a joke for his wife.

"Their reactions range from shock to anger to ac-

ceptance to rationalization of their physician's conduct," Widner said of the patients, some of whom testified Monday.

Widner told the panel she does expect Phipps will contest allegations that he showed patients other photos than the four already admitted, that he told some patients not to tell the college, that he made sexualized comments - "words to indicate that he was well endowed," Widner said - and that he had an erection in at least two patient encoun-

ters.

The defence is not expected to present its case until October because an unspecified medical condition makes it difficult for Phipps to testify, Widner said. He is also on a medical leave of absence from work.

The doctor mostly kept his head down during testimony from his patients, some of whom have remained his patients along with their family members. Patient A is not one of them. She said she burst into tears in her car after Phipps

showed her the photos in the examination room, and later texted him to say she never wanted to see him again.

"I really liked him, I trusted him. I did not have an issue with Dr. Phipps at all," Patient A said of the nearly two decades she spent as his patient.

But at her last appointment with Phipps, Patient A said he recounted his "amusing story" mentioned by Widner in her opening statement, and showed her three photos of himself, including pictures where you could see his penis and buttocks.

"I was completely shocked, upset, uncomfortable. I didn't understand what had happened, I hadn't experienced that type of scenario before," Patient A testified.

She remained adamant under cross-examination by Phipps' lawyer, Jenny Stephenson, that the photos she saw are different than the ones the doctor admits showing to patients and which Patient A was asked to look at Monday.

"I can assure you 100 per cent that the photos I saw today . . . are not the pictures" she saw in Phipps' examination room, Patient A testified.

"The penis I recall seeing was in a downward position as well, but slightly more engorged."

The discipline hearing continues.

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