

HALE FIGHTS LAWSUIT FROM SHOOTING SPREE'S VICTIMS

Chicago Tribune - September 28, 1999

Author: Ellen Almer, Tribune Staff Writer.

A lawyer for white supremacist Matthew Hale filed a motion today in Cook County Circuit Court asking a judge to dismiss a lawsuit charging Hale is partially responsible for Benjamin Smith's July 4 weekend shooting spree.

"The very idea that a person can be held liable for the violent acts of another, on the ground that his political views 'caused' the violent acts, is totally repugnant to the First Amendment," said attorney Glenn Greenwald, referring to a suit filed in August by two of Smith's victims and their families.

In that suit, the victims, who are Orthodox Jews injured in the rampage, say Hale's racist views inspired Smith to engage in a 3-day shooting spree that killed two and wounded 11.

"In light of the complete absence of any claim that Matt Hale actually participated in the Ben Smith shootings, the lawsuit is based on a theory of 'guilt by association,' which is as dangerous as it is unconstitutional," Greenwald said.

Hale, the leader of the Peoria-based World Church of the Creator, a group that preaches white supremacy, repeatedly has been denied a license to practice law in the state of Illinois. But in August, the American Civil Liberties Union took up Hale's cause, insisting he has the right to practice free speech.

Edition: ONLINE

Section: NEWS

Page: 1

Index Terms: GROUP ; LAWSUIT ; VICTIM ; ETHNIC ; CRIME ; SHOOTING

Record Number: CTR9909300419

Copyright 1999, Chicago Tribune