

TIMELINE – KANAKUK FRAUD LITIGATION

1994 - 2005

Plaintiff Andrew Summersett attends Kanakuk every summer from 1994 (age 7) until 2005 (age 18).

1995

Defendants hire Newman as a camp counselor from Auburn University despite an incomplete application.

1999

Newman caught nude with children - Parents notified camp leadership that Newman had led nude activities with several young boys on campgrounds owned by Joe White, including nude four-wheeling and swimming.

Newman is promoted to full-time staff at Kanakuk and begins serving as the Director of Father-/Son Retreats. He maintains this role and a variety of promotions until 2009.

Parent suspects sexual misconduct with son - A concerned parent reported her suspicion of Newman exhibiting unusual sexual behavior toward her son at a father-son retreat after witnessing her son throw away his jeans and proclaiming, "I never want to see Pete again."

2000

Newman is promoted to summer staff leadership as Men's Director of K-Kountry, Kanakuk's summer camp for elementary-aged students.

2001

Newman receives formal warning from supervisor - Newman's direct supervisor, Will Cunningham (Director of K-Kountry), sends Newman a [formal letter](#) warning him to "avoid sleeping one-on-one with children" along with other corrective guidelines and recommendations.

Newman is promoted to Assistant Director of K-Kountry.

2001 - 2002

Plaintiff Andrew Summersett alleges abuse by Newman.

2003

Newman caught nude with children again - Defendants receive new reports of Newman sexually abusing children, including leading nude swimming activities and nude basketball games with boys.

Newman receives disciplinary action - Cunningham reprimanded Newman and dismissed him from participating in the 2003 Summer Leadership Weekend. Cunningham did not have authority to terminate director-level employees, so this was the most severe disciplinary action he could execute as Newman's supervisor. Only Kanakuk CEO Joe White could terminate director-level employees.

Direct supervisor recommends Newman's termination - Cunningham did not have the authority in his role to terminate Newman, so he strongly recommends his termination to the Defendants, who declined to honor Cunningham's request and they, rather, fully reinstated Newman.

Newman maintains leadership role - Rather than terminating Newman as requested by his direct supervisor, Will Cunningham, Defendants maintain Newman's assistant director role and continued aggressively promoting him as the face of Kanakuk in marketing materials and fundraising nationally. Newman would also frequently lead Kanakuk International trips to Haiti, China, and other countries.

2003-2008

Plaintiff Logan Yandell alleges abuse by Newman in multiple U.S. states and even abroad on a mission trip to China.

2005

Newman is promoted to Kamp Director of K-Kountry after Will Cunningham leaves his role. Newman fully assumes his role as K-Kountry Director in the summer of 2006.

2006

Defendants dismiss another concerned parent's report - A female camper reported to her mother that she witnessed Newman's inappropriate behavior with a boy camper during her K-Kountry term. The mother reported this to K-Kountry contacts, who said they would investigate the matter. They later responded that they had looked into the incident and that the female camper who reported the incident to her mother was neither athletic nor goldy enough to be a fit for Kanakuk, so she should not return.

Defendants learn of Newman's hot tub bible studies - Defendant White learned that Newman was "ministering" to children in his hot tub nightly. White felt this was enough of a problem to issue a [corrective action](#) himself. The correction, however, was not to prohibit the regular hot tub encounters but merely to encourage Newman to "reassess the amount of time he spent with his family."

2006 - 2007

Plaintiff Andrew Summersett works at Kanakuk as a "kidsitter" for the family of Kanakuk Directors Jamie Jo (White) Braner and Andrew Braner at the camp "K-Colorado," based in the Durango, Colorado, area.

2009

Defendants confronted Newman after receiving legal accusations from parents, 10 years after Defendants first learned of Newman's patterns of nudity with children.

Newman confesses - Defendants terminate Newman, and he leaves town until his arrest in September 2010. The camp tells families that Newman had a "family emergency" and to "keep him in their prayers." There is no warning provided to parents that Newman was terminated for confessing to crimes against children. Newman writes a full confession letter to Joe White in June 2010. According to sources, Newman goes on to work as a youth ministry consultant for Downline Ministries in Memphis, Tennessee, that summer.

To induce a swift settlement, Defendants told Plaintiff Logan Yandell's family that they had no prior knowledge of Newman sexually abusing children. With this understanding, plaintiff Yandell and his parents agree to settle their claims against Kanakuk for a confidential amount and enter into an NDA with Kanakuk and its insurer.

To avoid litigation, defendants Jamie Jo (White) Braner and Andrew Braner (the "Braners") tell Plaintiff Andrew Summersett that they had no prior knowledge of Newman sexually abusing children when he calls with questions about the situation. Plaintiff Andrew Summersett specifically asks the Braners if they knew about Newman's sexual activities with children. According to the [petition filed](#), The Braners responded that they did not know and advised Plaintiff to not "make a mess of this;" that "now [was] not a good time to talk;" and that Plaintiff Andrew Summersett should "back-off given the circumstances."

[2010](#)

Newman receives two life sentences plus 30 years in Missouri state prison based on multiple counts of statutory sodomy and child enticement involving child abuse on Kanakuk property and beyond. At the time of his sentencing, 57 victims were known, although that list has grown over time as more survivors continue to come forward and file claims.

Defendant Kanakuk drafts letters to send to parents (approximately 8,000 families) outlining the historical disciplinary actions that Kanakuk administered to Pete Newman for a years-long pattern of nudity with children. Kanakuk decides not to send the letter to families after learning from Defendant ACE Insurance that "any written response by Kanakuk can and may be used in civil litigation as a tool to show knowledge of improper actions of Mr. Newman prior to his arrest."

[2021](#)

Plaintiffs discovers fraud - Through advocacy web site FactsAboutKanakuk.com and a resurgence of media about Kanakuk abuse in 2021, multiple Plaintiffs discovered that Defendants did have prior knowledge of Newman's sexual abuse of minors, with incident reports spanning at least a decade. In particular, a December 2021 article revealed [new evidence](#) that Cunningham recommended Newman's termination in 2003 due to Newman's misconduct patterns.

[2021-2024](#)

More lawsuits filed -- Multiple John Does in various states file lawsuits against Pete Newman, Kanakuk and affiliated Defendants.

[November 2022](#)

Plaintiff Logan Yandel files a petition for damages caused by Defendants' fraud.

[November 2023](#)

Motions to dismiss are denied by judge for both Kanakuk and insurer ACE as Defendants in the petition filed by Plaintiff Logan Yandell. Kanakuk files a cross-claim against its insurer, alleging that ACE breached its contract by refusing to defend and indemnify the camp against Yandell's claim. A jury trial in the Yandell case is set for January 2025.

[May 2024](#)

Former Kanakuk staff member, Matt Harmon, is arrested for sexual assault of a child and released on \$40,000 bond. According to Facts About Kanakuk, Matt Harmon is the 12th convicted/formally alleged "[known abuser](#)" associated with Joe White and Kanakuk Ministries. Matt Harmon and his family are closely tied to Kanakuk Kamps and its leadership. Matt Harmon worked at K-Wild and K-Colorado and was affiliated with KLIFE in Dallas as well. His parents, Diane and Hank Harmon, maintain a residence next to the K-2 campgrounds, known as the "Harmon Cabin," and they are widely known to be close friends with Debbie-Jo and Joe White.

June 2024

Plaintiff Andrew Summersett files a petition for bodily damages caused by Defendants' fraud and deliberate omission of facts. He names Jamie Joe (White) and Andy Braner as co-defendants, among other Kanakuk leadership and its insurer.