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Tyson depressed workers' pay in hiring scheme

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. (AP) — Tyson Foods Inc. depressed workers' wages by hiring immigrants known to be illegal, according to a lawsuit filed by four former employees.

The lawsuit was filed Tuesday in U.S. District Court in Winchester by former hourly employees of Tyson's plant in Shelbyville. The plaintiffs say they are U.S. citizens and are seeking class-action status. "The civil action is going to compensate

the innocents who have been devastated by the illegal hiring scheme," said John McMahan, a Chattanooga attorney representing one of the plaintiffs. "It's the only way to hold Tyson accountable."

Tyson and six former managers, including a vice president, are accused in an indictment of conspiring to smuggle illegal immigrants to work at 15 company plants in Alabama, Indiana, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina,

Tennessee, Texas and Virginia.

Tyson spokesperson Ed Nix declined comment Wednesday on the lawsuit.

The lawsuit accuses Tyson of using temporary employment services and recruiters, who were paid for each immigrant the company hired. Non-immigrant workers in the same communities as the plants received much higher wages, according to the lawsuit.

Child treatment issue in court case

WACO, Texas (AP) — Attorneys argued before the Texas Supreme Court Wednesday that state common law allowed the parents of a child born four months prematurely to withhold treatment.

But the attorney for the Nashville, Tenn.-based hospital countered that a child has a right to life-saving treatment under the Texas Family Code.

Sidney Ainsley Miller, who was small enough to fit in the palm of her father's hand when she was born, is at the center of a legal dispute over whether parents should have been granted their wish to withhold treatment or if the hospital was obligated to do what it could to keep her alive.

Sidney was born Aug. 1990, at Women's Hospital in Houston. Today she is blind and mentally retarded, living in a painful world of contracted limbs and seizures in which she cannot walk, talk or feed herself.

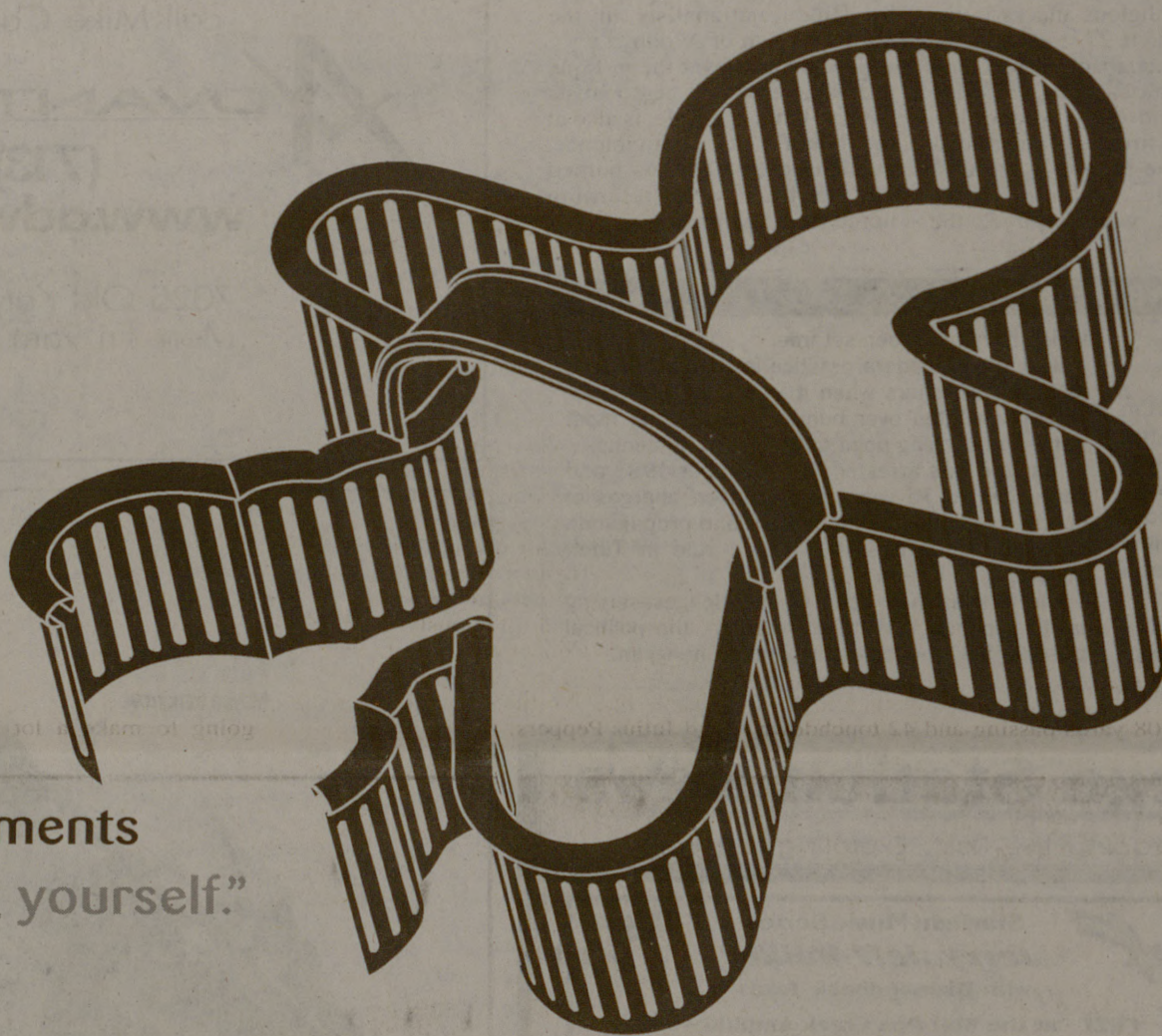
David Keltner, the Millers' attorney, said the family was told that resuscitation would result in severe disability. "There was a chance that Sidney may have lived without resuscitation," he said.

The Millers issued an affidavit decision that "no heroic measures be done" to save her. Doctors noted it in the file.

The hospital, however, determined state and federal laws required resuscitation attempts and that its own policies required live-saving efforts on any child born weighing at least 500 grams, or about 18 ounces. An ultrasound indicated Sidney weighed 629 grams.

Hospital officials say the child's disabilities resulted from "massive internal injuries unrelated to resuscitation."

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