



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on January 31, 2025

California Closes Case Against Center for Medical Progress With No Penalties

Chalk up another loss for former Vice President Kamala Harris. The lawfare that she, as California's then-attorney general, began almost a decade ago to stop undercover journalists from exposing Planned Parenthood's vile practices has just ended with a plea deal that doesn't even amount to a slap on her targets' wrists.

David Daleiden and Sandra Merritt of the Center for Medical Progress (CMP) reached a negotiated settlement with the state of California Monday. In exchange for the state's dropping all remaining felony counts against the pair, they agreed to plead "no contest" to one count. According to a [CMP press release](#), the plea "will be entered into judgment as a misdemeanor in 6 to 12 months, and then converted to a 'not guilty' plea, dismissed, and expunged." Daleiden and Merritt "will serve no prison time, will pay no fines, and will have no other penalties imposed," reads a [statement](#) from Liberty Counsel, which represented Merritt and called the plea bargain "essentially a complete victory" for her.



AP Images
David Daleiden

Former Los Angeles County District Attorney Steve Cooley, who led Daleiden's defense team, said:

In my 5 decades as an attorney, 40 years of which were as a prosecutor, I have never seen such a blatant exercise of selective investigation and vindictive prosecution. The California Attorneys General who initiated this case and pursued it for nearly 10 years should be ashamed for weaponizing their office to pursue people who were merely exposing illegality associated with the harvesting and sale of fetal body parts.

Horror Films

The CMP's first big break occurred about 10 years ago, when, posing as buyers of human body parts, Daleiden and Merritt were welcomed into the Houston, Texas, Planned Parenthood clinic. According to [LifeNews.com](#):

[Daleiden] was invited into the business's holy of holies: the "POC lab." "Products of conception," or "POCs," is the cold term Planned Parenthood uses to dissociate themselves



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from the children savagely ripped apart in their facilities. David was taken into the POC lab at Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast, where workers pulled a fully formed, freshly aborted child from the freezer. They dumped his mangled body parts into a Pyrex dish in order to demonstrate to David the quality and salability of their “products.”

As an arm was lifted out of the dish — joints, fingers, and fingernails could be seen, all perfectly formed. The arm had been severed from the live child’s body in utero when, just hours earlier, a Planned Parenthood abortionist had inserted forceps into the dilated cervix of a pregnant mother, grasped the baby’s arm, clamped the forceps’ teeth, and pulled mightily until the arm came off. The baby died of severe blood loss in the process of having his limbs and organs ravaged, one by one.

Daleiden and Merritt recorded hours of undercover videos featuring abortionists. Columnist [Jonathon Van Maren](#), who watched the videos after someone in Congress leaked them, wrote that it was “some of the most chilling material I have ever listened to.” Abortion doctors discussed which body parts were in demand and how best to obtain them, described how they evaded laws against partial-birth abortion, and elicited laughs from their colleagues when recounting their job difficulties such as losing an aborted baby’s head in the womb or having “an eyeball fall in [one’s] lap.”

Aborting Reporting

The CMP noted that the reporting that got it into trouble with California

led to a \$7.8 million settlement in which two companies [admitted](#) illegally selling aborted fetuses from Planned Parenthood in southern California, a settlement with [disgorgement](#) of profits from the sale of aborted fetal organs in Arizona, and the [disqualification](#) of Planned Parenthood from state and federal funding in Texas for violations of medical standards and ethics documented on the undercover footage — where Planned Parenthood [now](#) faces a nearly \$2 billion federal False Claims Act case from the disqualification.

It’s not hard to see, then, why Planned Parenthood and its allies have done everything in their power to stop the CMP. In California, they found an accomplice first in Harris and then in her successor, Xavier Becerra. Becerra charged Daleiden and Merritt with violating California’s law against secretly recording others, threatening them with up to 10 years in prison if convicted.

“Before this unprecedented case,” wrote Liberty Counsel, “the State of California had never criminally prosecuted undercover journalists for surreptitious recordings made in the public interest.” Of course, to Harris, Becerra, and Planned Parenthood, letting people in on abortionists’ dirty secrets was decidedly not “in the public interest.”

Harris was rewarded for her pro-abortion efforts with the positions of Vice President and, eventually, the Democratic Party’s 2024 presidential nominee. Becerra, meanwhile, was appointed Secretary of Health and Human Services in the Biden administration.

Their case against Daleiden and Merritt, however, has foundered, as did a [case](#) brought by a Texas county.



David Beats Goliath

Said Daleiden:

After enduring nine years of weaponized political prosecution, putting an end to the lawfare launched by Kamala Harris is a huge victory for my investigative reporting and for the public's right to know the truth about Planned Parenthood's sale of aborted baby body parts. Now we all must get to work to protect families and infants from the criminal abortion-industrial complex.

Taking the San Francisco case off the board allows me to focus fully on CMP's mission to report on the injustices of taxpayer-funded experiments on aborted babies and continue to expand our groundbreaking investigative reporting.



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