

Nanny who was 'virtual slave' wins \$55K in B.C. human rights case

Tribunal finds employers sexually assaulted, isolated and underfed Filipino woman before she escaped

By Jason Proctor, [CBC News](#) Posted: Apr 01, 2015 6:29 PM PT Last Updated: Apr 02, 2015 12:26 PM PT

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B.C.'s Human Rights Tribunal has awarded more than \$55,000 to a Filipino woman who was held as a "virtual slave" in a Richmond hotel by a Hong Kong family who planned to move to Canada.

The Filipino nanny employed by the family 'was a virtual slave,' tribunal member Catherine McCreary wrote in her decision.

The mother of two — called PN in [the decision](#) — was hired as a caregiver for the couple's two children.

According to the tribunal's decision, they brought the nanny with them to Canada in July 2013; the husband sexually assaulted her and the wife humiliated and abused her in the hotel suite where they stayed while looking for a house.

Even the children made fun of her.

"PN was a virtual slave," tribunal member Catherine McCreary wrote in her decision.

"She was isolated, underfed and treated like she was sub-human; all because she was a young Filipino mother who needed the job to take care of her own children. I would like to think that this behaviour does not occur in B.C."

Docked wages

The nanny was 28 at the time she was working for the couple, identified as FR and MR.

They hired her through an employment agency and paid her \$600 Cdn a month to work from 5:30 a.m. to 11 p.m. for them in Hong Kong. She said she had to eat her food while standing and was docked wages for sitting down.

The nanny said the husband, FR, first started sexually assaulting her in Hong Kong. She said he turned off the closed circuit television in their house and forced her to stroke his penis.

When the couple decided to move to Canada, the nanny claimed she was pressured to join them. They arrived in Richmond on July 7, 2013, and moved into a two-bedroom hotel suite near the airport while they looked for a house.

The nanny claimed she was forced to sleep on a couch in the living area. She said she was only allowed to eat with permission from MR, who called her names like "garbage," "stupid" and "evil."

She claimed FR also started sexually assaulting her again.

"He warned her that she would be sent home if she told anyone and that she should be worried about her children," McCreary wrote. "He said that if she told MR, there would be big trouble for her."

A ruse to escape

The nanny used a trip to the garbage as a ruse to run away from the hotel on Aug. 18, 2013.

"She had no money, no passport, no extra clothing, no toiletries, and no eyeglasses. She knew no one." McCreary wrote.

"This experience of escaping would become one of the most traumatic aspects of her relationship with the respondents."

According to the decision, the nanny called police, who initially told her the jurisdiction for solving her problem was in Hong Kong.

But RCMP called her back after FR reported the caregiver missing.

The nanny ultimately made her way to a Vancouver safe house for women who have been victims of sexual exploitation or human trafficking. She can't work in Canada and does not qualify for social assistance.

Couple denied mistreatment

FR and MR have since returned to Hong Kong; FR appeared at the tribunal by video conference, but MR didn't appear at all.

They claimed they treated the nanny like a member of their family and did not discriminate against her. FR denied the nanny's allegations and claimed her real purpose in coming to Canada was to run away.

In her decision, McCreary said the nanny was both exploited and discriminated against as a Filipino woman.

She was awarded \$5,866.89 for wages she made during her stay with the family. But McCreary ordered FR and MR to pay her another \$50,000 for injury to dignity, feelings and self-respect.

The ruling is one of the largest awards in the tribunal's history.