

Media barred from Garrido competency trial jury selection

By Sam Stanton, Sacramento Bee

The El Dorado Superior Court in the Phillip Garrido kidnap case has closed jury selection in the upcoming mental competency trial to the media, a move that sparked objections from a lawyer for The Bee and other news organizations.

In a notice posted on the court's website late Thursday, the court said that "due to the limited number of seats available in the courtroom, the media will not be allowed in the courtroom during Jury selection" when Garrido's mental competency trial is set to begin Feb. 28. He and his wife, Nancy, are facing charges that they abducted 11-year-old Jaycee Lee Dugard in 1991 and held her captive for 18 years.

The ban on coverage of the process will continue "until a jury has been selected," the court website stated.

The notice prompted immediate objections from Karl Olson, a San Francisco-based attorney for The Bee and a statewide coalition of media organizations who has been working to open up sealed documents in the high-profile case.

The dispute comes amid preparations for a hearing in Placerville on Thursday that may determine whether Garrido's mental competency trial actually begins Feb. 28.

Read the whole story