

VERDICTS & SETTLEMENTS

\$25 MILLION SETTLEMENT

City pays wrongfully imprisoned man eight-figure settlement

Action: Civil rights violation

Injuries alleged: Wrongful

conviction and resulting imprisonment for more than

44 years and infliction of

emotional harm on plaintiff

Case name: Long v. City of Concord, et al

Court/case no.: Eastern District of North Carolina / 5:21-CV-201-D

Judge: James C. Dever III

Mediator: Bill Brazile

Amount: \$25 million

Date: Jan. 9, 2024

Attorneys: Chris Olson of Olson Law, Raleigh, and David Rudolf and Sonya Pfeiffer of Pfeiffer Rudolf, Charlotte (for the plaintiff)

Plaintiff, a Black man then 20 years old, was wrongfully convicted in 1976 for the rape

of a white widow at her home in Concord.

No physical evidence linked him to the crime. The case was built upon the purported identification of plaintiff after a contrived and highly suggestive courtroom ID procedure.

Substantial exculpatory evidence was collected but unlawfully concealed by investigators. Evidence of that misconduct by law enforcement would trickle out over the next 40 years, leading to plaintiff's exoneration in August 2020 and him being granted a pardon of innocence in December 2020.

A lawsuit was filed in May 2021 against the city of Concord and several of its police officers.

After the lawsuit was filed, plaintiff's counsel received documents for the first



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time indicating that State Bureau of Investigation personnel also were involved in the investigation. An amended complaint naming SBI personnel as defendants was filed in June 2021. Claims against the SBI defendants were resolved for \$3 million in March 2023.

The remaining claims against Concord and its police defendants were settled for \$22 million in January 2024. In addition to the monetary damage, the city agreed to issue a formal apology to plaintiff and his family for the wrongs done to them.