



## Winston Secures Largest Jury Verdict in Firm's Pro Bono History in Section 1983 Case Against NYPD Officers

AUGUST 9, 2023

On August 3, 2023, Winston attorneys secured a significant trial victory in the Eastern District of New York on behalf of pro bono client Andre Adams. Adams, a Black Staten Island resident, sued three New York Police Department (NYPD) officers for false arrest and denial of a fair trial based on fabrication of evidence. Following a four-day trial, a jury awarded Adams \$1.125 million in damages.

In 2018, Adams was arrested without probable cause in the hallway of the New York City Housing Authority building in which he lived. The police officers claimed to have observed Adams in possession of a marijuana cigarette—which was never recovered—and placed him under arrest. While taking Adams out of the building in handcuffs, the arresting officer and Adams fell down a staircase. Though the officers knew it to be false, they claimed that Adams, while in handcuffs, assaulted the officer by intentionally throwing himself and the officer down the stairs. After video surfaced of the fall in the stairwell, all charges against Adams were dismissed. Before dismissal, however, Adams was held in custody for over 48 hours and spent the next eight months worried that he would be incarcerated for crimes, including assault on a police officer, that he did not commit.

The jury returned a verdict for Adams on all counts, finding that the officers falsely arrested him for possession of marijuana and fabricated evidence to support both the marijuana and felony assault charges. The jury awarded Adams a total of \$1,125,000 in compensatory and punitive damages, concluding that each of the officers had acted with a conscious disregard for Adams's rights.

The Winston team included partner Angela Smedley; associates Allie Kushner and Lisa Coutu; Law Clerks Nathan Greess, and Milcah Zewdie; Pro Bono Administrator Ken Berry; Rudy Radic; and Chris Haralambidis. Kushner and Coutu each examined a key witness at trial. The team was assisted by summer associates David Phillips, Jasmine Bovia, and Sophia Borne, and paralegal Karen Forte. Winston partnered with civil rights attorney and former Winston associate Joel Wertheimer in trying this case.

This representation is part of [Winston's Racial Justice & Equity CEASE Initiative](#).

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