



Dr. Angelo E. Gousse Awarded \$33 Million by Jury in LAPD-Rampart Division Racial Profiling Lawsuit

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LOS ANGELES--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Nov. 19, 2003--A Los Angeles Superior Court jury, after three days of deliberation, awarded Dr. Angelo E. Gousse \$33 million in general damages in his civil lawsuit against the LAPD-Rampart Division, City of Los Angeles and Budget Rent-A-Car Corporation (NYSE:CD). The jury apportioned 57 percent of that amount, or \$18,810,000, to Budget Rent-A-Car Corporation; and 43 percent of that amount, or \$15,510,000, to the City of Los Angeles/LAPD.

The trial began October 20, 2003 and was heard before the Hon. Elizabeth A. Grimes. Dr. Gousse was represented by Browne Greene with the Santa Monica, CA. law firm of Greene, Broillet, Parish & Wheeler, LLP and Robert W. Kelley with the Office of Sheldon J. Schlesinger, P.A. of Fort Lauderdale, FL. Gousse vs. City of Los Angeles, Case No. BC 252804.

"The jury correctly appreciated that Budget Rent-A-Car and the police played equal roles in this case and has held them responsible for Dr. Gousse's injuries"

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"If it could happen to me," said Dr. Angelo E. Gousse, "it could happen to you. The jury recognized that a great injustice was done to me and voted accordingly, and I am most grateful to them. I know that I would not have been manhandled, disrespected or injured had I been a white man, and that's why I have spoken out about this case from the beginning."

Added Dr. Gousse: "Now that this trial is over, it is my intent to carry the torch lit by Abner Louima, whose civil rights were violated by the NYPD in 1997, by launching Civil Rights Net. As a web-based non-profit organization, Civil Rights Net will function to better educate the public about their civil rights, and provide them with helpful links, such as referrals to law firms and other civil rights advocacy groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union."

"The jury correctly appreciated that Budget Rent-A-Car and the police played equal roles in this case and has held them responsible for Dr. Gousse's injuries," said Browne Greene, "but the victory is bittersweet because he will always be traumatized by the jarring way in which the LAPD-Rampart police treated him. We hope that this case sends a strong message across the United States that no one is above the law when it comes to civil rights violations, particularly those sworn to protect those very rights -- the police."

Dr. Gousse filed suit June 21, 2001 against the Defendants for civil rights violations, civil battery, false arrest, negligence and loss of consortium. He alleged that Budget Rent-A-Car's negligence set the stage for the LAPD's misconduct, and which caused him permanent injuries.

A Miami, FL. urological reconstructive surgeon, Dr. Gousse, a 40-year-old black man of Haitian descent, came to Los Angeles in

February 2001 for a UCLA medical conference. He rented a car from Budget's LAX location that bore the switched plates of another of its cars that had been reported stolen. Budget's policy was not to allow any of its vehicles to exit the rental lot if its license plate number did not correspond with the license plate number listed in its computer. Dr. Gousse was allowed to leave the lot, even though the license plates on his car were mismatched, and which fact had escaped Budget's attention on 43 other separate occasions with its customers.

On February 11, 2001, Dr. Gousse was driving westbound on the Santa Monica Freeway near Arlington Street when he was stopped by LAPD-Rampart Division officers. Back-up units and a police helicopter were called to the scene, and with their guns aimed at him, the police ordered Dr. Gousse to the ground. He was handcuffed, then pulled up from a prone position, placed in a squad car and taken to Rampart Division. He was arrested, but never read his Miranda rights.

At the scene, Dr. Gousse alleges that the police made no effort to look at his identification or to retrieve the exculpatory car rental documents that were in the glove compartment. He complained that the handcuffs were too tight, but they weren't removed until his hands had gone numb and he was placed in a jail cell. Throughout his almost 2-hour ordeal, Dr. Gousse was subjected to verbal abuse by the police. At the Rampart Station, they learned that the arrest was improper. Instead of releasing him, they began running a tape recorder and tried to ask Dr. Gousse leading questions in an attempt to "cover-up" the police officers' misconduct, but he did not succumb to this ruse.

Editor's Note:

Dr. Gousse and his wife, Marie May Gousse, were represented by lead trial attorney Browne Greene with the Santa Monica, CA. law firm of Greene, Broillet, Panish & Wheeler, LLP (www.gbpwlaw.com); Tel: 310-576-1200; and Robert W. Kelley with the Office of Sheldon J. Schlesinger, P.A. of Fort Lauderdale, FL.; Tel: 954-467-8800.

Defendant City of Los Angeles was represented by Cory Brente and Christian Bojorquez with the City Attorney's Office; Tel: 213-978-7027.

Defendant Budget Rent-A-Car was represented by Donald W. Carlson with Carlson, Calladine & Peterson, LLP; Tel: 415-391-8141.

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