

names and to refrain from further acts of infringement, tarnishment, cybersquatting or unfair competition.

LEGAL PROFESSION

Civil-Rights Attorneys Won \$200,154 In Excessive Force Case

CASE: Crawford v. City of New London

COURT: United States District Court

DOC. NO.: 3:11cv1371 • **COURT OPINION BY:** Arterton, J.

DATE: March 12, 2015 • **PAGES:** 22

A "prevailing party" in a §1983 civil-rights suit can be entitled to attorney fees. Plaintiff Robert Crawford filed a 10-count complaint against 10 defendants. In June 2014, a jury concluded that defendant Graham Mugovero violated plaintiff's Fourth and Fourteenth Amendment rights to be free of excessive use of force. After a four-day trial, a jury awarded Crawford \$15,000 in economic damages and \$35,000 in non-economic damages, for a total award in the amount of \$50,000. Plaintiff applied for attorney fees, as a prevailing party in a §1983 civil-rights suit. The litigation did not involve any novel or complex issues, and the court found that the request for \$450 per hour was excessive.

Attorney David Jaffe, a partner at Brown Paindiris, has been active in the American Civil Liberties Union and has 30 years of experience in civil-rights litigation. The court approved a rate of \$410 per hour for lead attorneys Jaffe

The court excluded time spent to research and litigate a *Monell* claim against the City of New London. The court reduced attorney fees 25 percent to account for partial success and approved attorney fees of \$41,361 to Attorney Jaffe for a total attorney fee award in the amount of \$197,403. The court restricted expert fees to \$40 and travel expenses. Ruling on an issue that has divided the circuit courts, the court followed precedent in the Federal, Fifth, Sixth, Eighth and Eleventh Circuits and found that postjudgment interest began to accrue on the date of judgment, as opposed to the date on which the award was quantified. The court awarded \$200,154 in attorney fees and costs, plus postjudgment interest at the rate of .25 percent.