



Credit: Frame Stock
Footage/Shutterstock

NEWS

Paralyzed Man Gets \$10M in Police Brutality Case, Believed to Be Largest Such Award in New Jersey

The settlement comes after a trial in the case ended in a hung jury, with jurors unable to reach a unanimous verdict. Lawyers for the paralyzed man, Xavier Ingram, claimed he was paralyzed after an arresting officer, Sgt. Jeremy Merck, stepped on his neck during an arrest.

May 09, 2022 at 03:02 PM

🕒 5 minute read

Civil Rights

[Charles Toutant](#) →

What You Need to Know

- Camden County agrees to a \$10 million settlement in a police excessive force suit by Xavier Ingram.
- The settlement was reached roughly five weeks after a mistrial was declared due to jurors who were unable to reach a unanimous verdict.
- The settlement is believed to be the largest in any police brutality case in New Jersey and one of the largest ever nationwide, according to Ingram's lawyers.

Camden County has agreed to a \$10 million settlement in a suit by a man who was left paralyzed from the neck down when a police officer stepped on his neck during an arrest.

The settlement is believed to be the largest in any police brutality case in New Jersey, and one of the largest ever nationwide, according to the plaintiff's law firm, Mazie, Slater, Katz & Freeman of Roseland, New Jersey.

The settlement comes after a trial in the case ended in a hung jury, with jurors unable to reach a unanimous verdict.

Lawyers for plaintiff Xavier Ingram claimed he was paralyzed after an arresting officer, Sgt. Jeremy Merck, stepped on his neck during an arrest.

Meanwhile, lawyers for the Camden County Police Department denied that Merck stepped on Ingram's neck and claimed that he was paralyzed from a slip and fall on wet pavement.

During the two-week trial, Ingram was brought to court on a stretcher, and he testified from a hospital bed set up in front of the jury. Testimony from experts in orthopedic surgery and biomechanics, presented by the plaintiff, told the jury the injuries to Ingram's neck could only have

been caused by the forces applied by police, and could not have been caused by a slip and fall.

According to the suit, Ingram, then 20, was standing with friends outside his apartment on June 12, 2014, when several police officers approached. The officers found a gun lying on the ground, which they suspected was left there by Ingram, according to court papers. Ingram went into a nearby store, bought a soda, then emerged to find a police officer approaching him. Because he was scared, he fled. Rain was falling, and Ingram slipped and fell, according to court documents.

Ingram said that as soon as he fell two officers were on top of him, one pressing a knee in his back and the other pressing a knee on his neck. A moment later, when Merck, the senior officer, arrived, Ingram told him he could not feel his legs. Merck allegedly said “shut up” to Ingram, then stepped on his neck. Ingram heard a crack, felt extreme pain, and blacked out, according to court papers.

Beth Baldinger of Mazie, Slater, Katz & Freeman in Roseland, New Jersey. Courtesy photo

Ingram was charged with possession of drugs and a stolen gun, but evidence was introduced at trial to show those items were planted, according Beth

Baldinger, the lead attorney for Ingram. Three officers gave conflicting stories about who found the drugs, and when and where they were found. Within two weeks of the civil trial concluding, the criminal charges were dismissed, Baldinger said.

Juan Sanchez, chief judge of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, presided at trial. U.S. Magistrate Judge Pamela Carlos, also of the Eastern District, conducted settlement negotiations before and after trial.

Citing several high-profile cases of Black teens and adults who were killed by police in recent years, Mazie Slater said in a statement that the settlement for Ingram exceeded those awarded to the families of Tamir Rice and Eric Garner, \$6 million each, and Freddie Gray, \$6.4 million.

But Ingram’s award was less than the \$12 million awarded in the death of Breonna Taylor or the \$27 million awarded in the death of George Floyd.

Baldinger represented Ingram along with Cory Rothbort and Trevor Dickson of the same firm.

A key moment in the trial was when she showed that the officials at the Camden County Prosecutor’s Office met, just a few hours after the arrest, and decided to issue a press release attributing Ingram’s paralysis to a slip and fall on the pavement, even before any investigation was conducted, Baldinger said.

William Tambussi of Brown & Connery. Courtesy photo

Baldinger said the settlement will permit Ingram to move into an apartment from the nursing home where he now resides.

Baldinger said her adversaries attempted “to cast Mr. Ingram as an urban, Camden young man, in a stereotypical manner.” But Ingram spends his days reading the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal and staying in touch with his four children via FaceTime, Baldinger said.

“He has decided to live his best life, despite his circumstances,” Baldinger said, calling the settlement “an excellent result for my client. He had an opportunity to come into court and tell his truth.”

Camden County was represented by William Tambussi, William Cook and Andrew Brown of Brown & Connery in Westmont, New Jersey, and Howard Lane Goldberg and Christopher Orlando of the Office of the Camden County Counsel.

Tambussi declined to comment, and referred a reporter's call to a spokesman for Camden County, Dan Keashen.

Keashen, in a statement, said, "In complete disagreement, and based on the insurance carrier forcing the hand of Camden County, we will be settling the case with Mr. Ingram. At the time of this incident in 2014, Mr. Ingram ducked between two cars where a hot hand gun was found and had heroin in his possession when he slipped and fell without being touched while running from police officers pursuing him in the Bergen Square neighborhood. Based on the settlement the county maintains, and continues to maintain, that no wrongdoing took place, and is not liable for any of the actions and circumstances of the aforementioned incident."

RELATED STORIES

Mistrial: Jury Deadlocked in Suit Claiming Man Paralyzed When Police Officer Stepped on His Neck

Trial to Begin in Suit Over Arrest That Left Man Paralyzed, With Litigants Far Apart on Cause of Injuries

You Might Like

June 03, 2022

Motel Operators Agree to \$900K Settlement Over Employee's Sexual Assaults on Child

By [Charles Toutant](#)

🕒 3 minute read

June 02, 2022

3rd Circ.: Direct Investment in Every Fund Not Necessary for Standing in ERISA Class Action

By [Colleen Murphy](#)

🕒 4 minute read

May 18, 2022

NJ Judge Censured After Failing to Recuse Himself From Mayor's Son's Domestic Violence Case

By [Colleen Murphy](#)

🕒 4 minute read

May 26, 2022

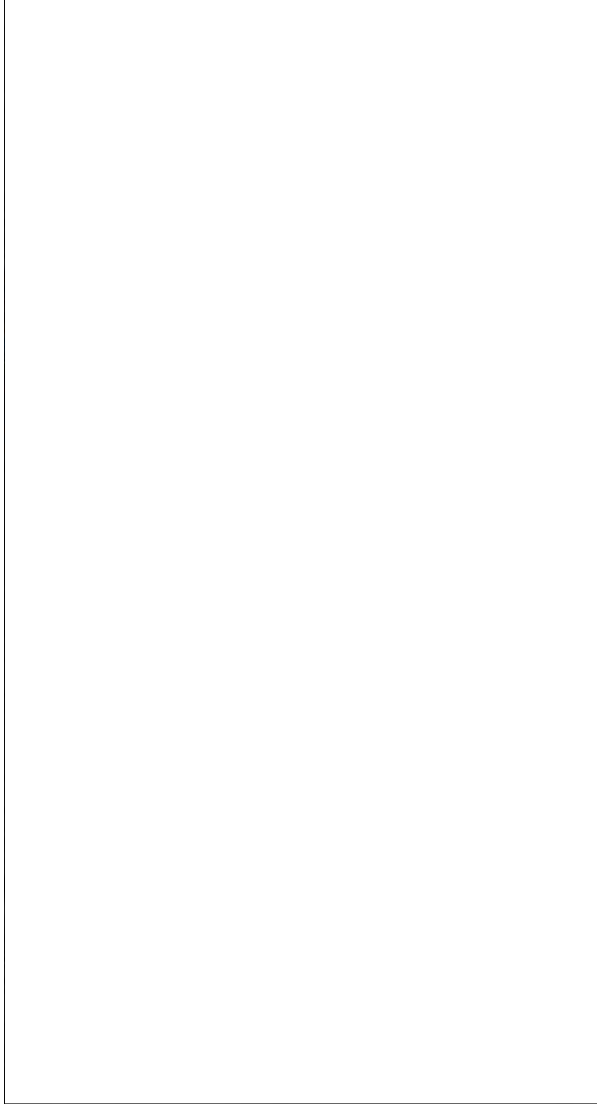
NJ Supreme Court Will Soon Operate With 3 Vacant Seats

By [Colleen Murphy](#)

🕒 4 minute read

LAW FIRMS MENTIONED

Brown & Connery, LLP



LAW.COM RADAR

TRENDING LAW FIRMS THIS WEEK

[On My Radar](#) [All Law.com](#) ▼

- 1. **Milberg Coleman Bryson Phillips Grossman**
5 new blips
- 2. **Kazerouni Law Group**
4 new blips
- 3. **Akerman**
3 new blips
- 4. **Lewis Brisbois Bisgaard & Smith**
3 new blips
- 5. **Maynard, Cooper & Gale**
3 new blips

[Open Law.com Radar](#)

TRENDING STORIES

Meet the Brown Rudnick Duo Pursuing Human Trafficking Claims Against Pornhub

THE RECORDER

Lawsuit Demands New York Courts to Make Public 'Secret' Directives to Judges

NEW YORK LAW JOURNAL

Cravath to Launch DC Office,

LAW.COM PRO

What to Expect With Mergers, Leverage, Costs, Clients and Morale: Your Questions About Am Law 100 Trends Answered

Where the Am Law 200 Have Risks in a Downturn

Hiring Partners From FDIC and SEC

NATIONAL LAW JOURNAL

5 South Florida Judges Among 17 Candidates Vying for State Supreme Court Seat

DAILY BUSINESS REVIEW

Pornhub and Visa Face Sex Trafficking, Child Pornography Claims from 34 Plaintiffs After NYT Report

THE RECORDER

The Am Law Second Hundred



Mentioned in a Law.com story?

License our industry-leading legal content to extend your thought leadership and build your brand.

LEARN MORE

FEATURED FIRMS

Law Offices of Gary Martin Hays & Associates P.C.
(470) 294-1674

Law Offices of Mark E. Salomone
(857) 444-6468

Smith & Hassler
(713) 739-1250

More From ALM

CLE Center



Premium Subscription

With this subscription you will receive unlimited access to high quality, online, on-demand premium

Team Accounts

Our Team Account subscription service is for legal teams of four or more attorneys. Each attorney is

Bundle Subscriptions

Gain access to some of the most knowledgeable and experienced attorneys with our 2 bundle options!

content from well-respected faculty in the legal industry. This is perfect for attorneys licensed in multiple jurisdictions or for attorneys that have fulfilled their CLE requirement but need to access resourceful information for their practice areas.

[View Now](#)

granted unlimited access to high quality, on-demand premium content from well-respected faculty in the legal industry along with administrative access to easily manage CLE for the entire team.

[View Now](#)

Our Compliance bundles are curated by CLE Counselors and include current legal topics and challenges within the industry. Our second option allows you to build your bundle and strategically select the content that pertains to your needs. Both options are priced the same.

[View Now](#)

[Go to CLE Center](#)

Legal Newswire

RubyLaw Launches the 2022 Legal Marketing Technology Stack Blueprint, Giving Law...

Real Estate Finance Rising Star Pablo Clarke Joins Paul Hastings from Latham & W...

ALM Releases 2022 Diversity Scorecard Featuring Enhanced Criteria & Methodology

Forrest Solutions Legal Launches Premiere Document Review Services Across Manage...

[Submit a press release](#)



Sign Up Today and Never Miss Another Story

As a part of your digital membership, you can sign up for an unlimited number of a wide range of complimentary newsletters. Visit your My Account page to make your selections. Get the timely legal news and critical analysis you cannot afford to miss. Tailored just for you. In your inbox. Every day.

[Subscribe to ALM Legal Publications Newsletters](#)



LAW.COM

The industry-leading media platform offering competitive intelligence to prepare for today and anticipate opportunities for future success.

[About Us](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Advertise With Us](#) | [Customer Service](#) | [Terms of Service](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)



Copyright © 2022 ALM Global, LLC. All Rights Reserved.