

PRESS RELEASE

December 21, 2023

Seattle, WA – Today, the jury in the trial of *Ellis vs. University of Washington* found that UW racially harassed five Black employees of the UW Police Department, awarding them over \$16,000,000 in compensation.

The trial included dozens of hostile workplace incidents spanning multiple years. For example:

- Racial slurs, including the n-word, directed at Black officers;
- A banana being placed in front of a Black officer's locker with a note saying, "here's your lunch, you fucking monkey";
- White officers sparking their tasers near Black officers in an attempt to intimidate them;
- A White supervisor who struck a Black officer with a stick and said, "You people should be used to being hit with these";
- White officers complaining to Black officers about too many Black officers having been hired in the Department; and
- A Black officer having his brake lines cut while parked at work, an act the official investigation reported was motivated by anti-Black bias.

The President of the University of Washington, Ana Mari Cauce, and other University officials had personally testified against the Plaintiffs at trial.

Toby Marshall, one of the officers' attorneys, made the following statement after receiving the verdict:

"Today is a victory for Russell Ellis, Gabriel Golden, Hamani Nowlen, Damien Taylor, and Karinn Young, all of whom have persevered against great odds to finally set the record straight about the University of Washington Police Department.

It is also a victory for racial justice. The jury's verdict vindicates the allegations of five Black employees who exposed discrimination within the department at personal risk.

And it is a victory for workers. Five employees at the lowest level of their department overcame the full institutional weight of one of the state's most powerful entities after a six-week trial in which the President of the University and other officials personally testified against them.

The University of Washington has turned a blind eye to the problems in its police department for far too long. Our hope—and our clients hope—is that UW can no longer look away."

Plaintiffs were represented by attorneys at Terrell Marshall Law Group PLLC and Nelson Boyd PLLC.

Media Contact:

Ryan Tack-Hooper
206.816.6603 /ryan@terrellmarshall.com