

# Brothers get \$15,000 in police beating

## Federal jury stipulates officers pay personally

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A federal jury has ordered two police officers each to pay \$7,500 of their own money for beating two brothers before a Los Angeles Lakers championship game in Inglewood three years ago.

Inglewood officer Peter Friesen and former Inglewood officer Robert Richmond, who transferred earlier this month to the Manhattan Beach Police Department, were accused of using excessive force against two brothers who owned a liquor store across the street from The Forum.

"It sends a message that juries are not any longer going to believe what they say simply because they are police officers," attorney Edward Fox said. "And they are not going to get away with this nonsense."

The jury also ruled Friday that the city of Inglewood must pay \$1,000 in compensatory damages to Timothy Bernard Bell, 33, of Inglewood and \$800 to his brother, Tyrone, 38, of Carson for the June 12, 1991,

scuffle. Jurors could not reach a decision on excessive-force charges against officer Philip Colonelli.

### The situation

Fox said Tyrone Bell was working as a clerk inside the store at Manchester Boulevard and Prairie Avenue. Timothy waited outside in the parking lot for his girlfriend, who was going to the game with him.

Richmond mistook Timothy Bell for a ticket scalper, and ordered him against a car and to spread his legs, Fox said.

"Tim Bell kept saying, 'Why are you doing this?'" Fox said. "Tim probably didn't pass an attitude test, so the officer pulled out a sap and hit him over the head."

A martial arts expert, Timothy Bell grabbed Richmond's wrists to ward off further strikes. Before more officers arrived, the Bells' sister tried to pull Timothy Bell away. Tyrone Bell ran from the store and also began pulling him away, Fox said.

Friesen and Colonelli soon arrived and scuffled with the men, eventually arresting them, Fox said.

Tyrone Bell later pleaded guilty to disturbing the peace and paid a \$72 fine.

Charges against Timothy Bell were dropped, Fox said.

The officers' attorney, Nelson Atkins, did not return a telephone call seeking comment.

In court a week earlier, Atkins told a jury that Timothy Bell spit on the ground in front of the officer and refused to sign a citation. Richmond had no choice but to arrest him, Atkins said.

Inglewood City Attorney Howard Rosten said it was too early to say whether the city will appeal. He said the city does not believe the officers violated anyone's rights.

If and when the judgment is finalized, the City Council can pay the amounts owed by the officers, he said. No officer has ever been held to pay personally in the city.

"That determination is made by the City Council based on all of the facts of the particular case," Rosten said.

Richmond was unavailable for comment, as was Friesen, who was on vacation.

Fox said it is uncommon for juries to order officers to pay personally in excessive-force cases. "They thought that Richmond was lying, and they were upset about that," Fox said.