

Briefly

Woman Gets \$8 Million In Police Brutality Case

In one of the largest police brutality verdicts in the history of the Northwest, Amy Conroy was awarded \$8 million on Feb. 2 by an Oregon federal district court jury. The jury found Oregon State patrolman David T. Henry guilty of excessive force.

"I think the jury is sending a message, and they wanted their voices to be heard. I believe they saw their role as policing the police" Edwin Budge, one of Conroy's attorneys, said.

In November 1997, Conroy was stopped by Henry for speeding. He suspected that Conroy had been drinking alcohol and asked her to exit the car to submit to sobriety tests, according to court reports.

Conroy complied. The jury found that Henry then threw her to the ground several times, beat her with a steel hasp, sprayed pepper spray into her face and shot her in the back. Barbiturates and cold medicine were later found in Henry's system.

"We maintain that Officer Henry was acting in the line of duty for his own protection" Kevin Neely, spokesman for the Oregon State attorney general's office, said. "It was a large verdict. We will be continuing to work with this case and an appeal has already been filed."

Conroy is partially disabled with an artificial shoulder and upper arm. "[Conroy] suffers from nightmares about police beating her. I don't think she will ever feel whole from what happened, but I think she feels vindicated" Budge stated.

Conroy was represented by Seattle attorneys Budge, Erik Heipt and Joseph Grube from Budge & Heipt as well as Chris Bottoms from the law offices of M. Christian Bottoms in Portland, Ore.

Robert Petersen and Anthony Ridolfo of the Oregon State attorney general's office defended Henry.

— Tamara Nowlin