

Two men who were convicted and wrongfully incarcerated for the 1984 rape and murder of a teenage girl have prevailed in a civil rights lawsuit in federal court in the Eastern District of New York. The two men, John Restivo and Dennis Halstead, were freed in 2003 when DNA from the victim's body did not match that of the defendants.

Restivo and Halstead brought suit against Nassau County and several ex-detectives, seeking damages for their wrongful incarceration. Last week, a federal jury returned a verdict in which each man was awarded \$18 million in damages. The case was brought pursuant to the federal civil rights statute, 42 U.S.C. § 1983.

The case was originally filed in 2006 and has been litigated in the trial and appellate courts of the federal court system since that time. Civil rights cases, particularly those involving wrongful incarceration, are extremely expensive, complex, and time-consuming to pursue. Individuals who believe they may have valid civil rights claims should consult with an attorney experienced in bringing civil rights actions in federal court.