

Only \$20 Million? The City of Exeter, Calif., Got Off Easy – Here's Why

City's Choice of Trial Following Horrific Mauling of Senior Citizen and Fatal Attack on Good Samaritan Rescuer 'Sheer Folly,' Says Leading Dog Bite Law Attorney

LOS ANGELES, CA, US, August 1, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- It should come as no surprise that the City of Exeter is facing a \$20 million payout following the horrific mauling of a senior citizen and fatal attack on the man who was rescuing her. "The city's decision to take the case to trial was sheer folly," says leading dog bite law attorney Kenneth M. Phillips.

In 2016, the Exeter Police Department had put one of its police dogs out of service and sold it to its human "partner," Officer Alex Geiger, the dog's handler. Four months after the dog went to live with Geiger as his deadly, trained-to-bite pet, the dog chewed through a fence, went after a mailman, attacked the elderly woman, and killed her would-be rescuer. Geiger was charged with involuntary manslaughter and criminal negligence but was found not guilty.

The injured senior and the family of the Good Samaritan sued the City of Exeter. Rather than work out a settlement, Exeter took the civil case to trial. "It was one of the worst legal strategies I have ever seen," said Beverly Hills-based Phillips. "They should have paid a few million instead of rolling the dice and losing twenty."

Per Phillips, Exeter gambled that a jury of ordinary people would side with the government at a time when many Americans are angry at our public officials, and particularly our police and animal control departments. "Californians now are up in arms about bad decisions recently made at all levels of government — cities, counties, to the state itself," Phillips said. "Look at the vast support for removing Gavin Newsom from office as the state's governor. People are angry, and juries are made up of people. This case went to trial amidst a backdrop of near rebellion against tone-deaf politicians and police departments."

"Did the City of Exeter believe it would get off because the officer who took this so-called "retired" police canine was found not guilty? The "not guilty" verdict at O.J. Simpson's criminal trial was quickly followed by a \$33 million judgment at his civil case. THAT'S what Exeter was risking here. They should consider themselves lucky at getting tapped for just half that amount," added Phillips.

"Don't forget the big picture. We rely on our police and animal control departments to protect

our neighborhoods from vicious dogs. When public servants put vicious dogs into our homes, they endanger us. The weakest among us, such as this 90-year-old plaintiff, are the ones who are put at the greatest risk, despite being the ones who should receive the most protection. It is infuriating to see this happen again and again, and therefore these civil cases are totally necessary to send a message to animal control officials, police departments and lawmakers that putting human lives at risk for the purpose of saving a vicious dog is intolerable.

“One of the things that people are so mad about is that nothing seems to get better. Yesterday I filed a big case against the City of Los Angeles following a shelter dog’s brutal mauling of a 70-year-old woman whose arm had to be amputated. Like Exeter Police Department, the Animal Services Department should never, ever have released the pit bull that caused this mayhem, at least not without having given full disclosure that the dog had previously attacked a jogger without provocation.” Phillips continued, “I predict the City will rather tangle with me than admit its very clear fault, and I am prepared to turn them upside down and inside out for their repeated, horrible mistakes. This is the price they will always have to pay for treating our neighbors worse than dogs.”

Attorney Kenneth M. Phillips of Beverly Hills, California, is America's most experienced dog bite lawyer, the only lawyer in the USA who has represented only dog bite victims since the 1990s.

The press call him:

"The dog bite king" (Today Show and Lawyers Weekly.)

"A leading expert in dog bite law" (Good Housekeeping.)

"The nation's best known practitioner of terrier torts" (Los Angeles Times.)

"The senior specialist in representing dog attack victims worldwide" (Animals 24/7).

Phillips is the author of Dog Bite Law (dogbitelaw.com) and a number of books about

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