

Lead Trial Attorney Kenneth Rosenfeld Weighs in on Landmark Dana Stubblefield Case

Ex-NFL Star's Rape Conviction Overturned with Hearings on the Docket, Lead Trial Attorney Kenneth Rosenfeld Provides Powerful Commentary

SAN JOSE, CA, UNITED STATES, January 14, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Lead Criminal Defense Attorney Kenneth Rosenfeld and Co-Counsel Allen Sawyer are very satisfied following the December 26 appellate court decision that overturned the rape conviction of their client, Dana Stubblefield, a former NFL player (Case #F1660022). The landmark ruling highlights significant violations of the [California Racial Justice Act](#) of 2020 (RJA) during the original trial and reaffirms the team's long-held belief in Stubblefield's innocence. This decision will bring about change across the State of California in how prosecutors try cases.



Lead Attorney Kenneth Rosenfeld, Stubblefield Rape Case, California Criminal Defense

But that's not the end of the story.

Rosenfeld will be in court later this week expediting their client's release from jail.

As stated by Rosenfeld,

“

We are taking this to the next step to have this case completely dismissed.”

Kenneth Rosenfeld

“Was it long overdue? It was.”

“Are we thankful? Yes.”

“Did we expect it? We absolutely expected this case to be overturned.”

According to court documents filed with the Court of Appeal of the State of California Sixth Appellate District on

December 26, 2024, a jury originally found Stubblefield, former defensive tackle for the SF 49ers, guilty of forcible rape, forcible oral copulation, and false imprisonment of a woman who had

gone to his Morgan Hill home to interview for a babysitting job; the jury furthermore found he used a firearm in the commission of the first two offenses. The trial court sentenced Stubblefield to a term of 15 years to life in prison; however, on December, 26, 2024, judges unanimously ruled that the prosecution engaged in misconduct by making racially charged statements during the trial.

Rosenfeld emphasized, "Racial discrimination has no place in our justice system. The jury's prior not-guilty finding regarding the alleged victim's developmental status highlights the weaknesses in the prosecution's case. This is potentially one of the biggest cases in the country."

At issue in the appeal were statements uttered by the prosecution at the original trial in July 2020, which Rosenfeld and Sawyer contended utilized racially discriminatory language that unjustly influenced the jury's perception. The prosecution's statements centered around the police's failure to search Stubblefield's residence for the firearm allegedly used in the commission of the aforementioned crimes. According to the court documents, the prosecutor in the closing arguments of the original trial said the police decided not to search Stubblefield's home because, as a famous Black man living in Morgan Hill, a "storm of controversy" would have ensued.

The appellate court ultimately found that, in explicitly asserting that Stubblefield's race played a role in the police's decision not to search his house, in suggesting Stubblefield gained an undeserved advantage at trial for being a Black man, and in implicitly referencing the then-recent events surrounding George Floyd's killing with the claim that a home search would have



Attorney Kenneth Rosenfeld Accompanies Dana Stubblefield



(Video screen grab KNTV NBC Ch 11): Former San Francisco 49ers' Dana Stubblefield listens to his verdict, shown in a screen grab from KNTV NBC Channel 11, at the Santa Clara County Hall of Justice, San Jose, CA, on 7/27/20

opened up “a storm of controversy,” thereby appealing to racially biased perceptions of those events, the prosecution’s statements amounted to “racially discriminatory language” and violated Penal Code section 745, subdivision (a)(2) of the Racial Justice Act. As such, the appellate court found the conviction legally invalid and vacated both conviction and sentence. According to court documents, the matter will be remanded to the trial court to conduct new proceedings consistent with Penal Code section 745, subdivision (a).

Kenneth Rosenfeld declared, “The court's decision is a victory not just for Mr. Stubblefield, but for the integrity of our legal process. It emphasizes the importance of ensuring that all evidence is presented fairly and that every defendant receives a trial free from prejudice. The prosecution's failure to search Stubblefield's home and the withholding of crucial evidence further demonstrate the systemic issues that led to this wrongful conviction. We are committed to continuing our fight to clear his name in the upcoming proceedings.”

The appellate court furthermore did not dispute that substantial evidence was withheld from the jury, which could have altered the trial's outcome. That Rosenfeld and Sawyer had previously secured in July 2020 two significant acquittals for Stubblefield, including rape of a person incapable of giving consent, and oral copulation of a person incapable of giving consent, affirmed the allegations against Stubblefield were unfounded.

“We are taking this to the next step to have this case completely dismissed.”

The case was "infected with tremendous error from the minute we started the trial," said Rosenfeld. “He is euphoric and looking forward to reuniting with his family. We always knew this was going to happen. There was no doubt in our minds, whatsoever, the minute this trial was over that it was coming back. You can't have a trial where you're calling somebody a big Black man the entire trial. We were not allowed to present evidence that the accuser was a sex worker, that we had proof she had self-interviewed with the police and admitted to being a sex worker and charging the same amount of money to other men than what Dana had paid her. Also, the judge in this case allowed the matter to be infected with racial bias and prejudice from the defense from the first second we started this trial.”

"This is one of the most significant racial justice decisions in the History of California. It's also a good decision for justice in general. Even though this has been codified to the Racial-Justice Act, the concept of having a fair and impartial trial and a fair and impartial judge has been around since the 1700s, and Dana had neither. We screamed about it from the moment this trial happened until the last gavel that was hit. At the end of the day, this verdict cannot stand."

About Kenneth Rosenfeld

With offices in Sacramento, San Jose, and Riverside County, The Rosenfeld Law Firm aggressively defends a wide range of [high-profile criminal defense cases](#) such as first-degree murder, sex offense cases, juvenile defense, appellate law, prison law, and California DUI defense. Kenneth Rosenfeld made regular appearances on KTXL TV and FOX40's Ask an Attorney. He was named

Litigator of the Year and recently recognized as a 2024 Lawyer of Distinction.

For more information, please contact The Rosenfeld Law Firm at (916) 447-2070.

Kenneth recommends Brian Murphy for [Philadelphia Nursing Home Abuse Attorney](#).

Bernard Hinlo

The Rosenfeld Law Firm

+1 916-447-2070

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