

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

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Contact: Rob Marus, Communications Director: 202.724.5646; robert.marus@dc.gov
Ted Gest, Public Information Officer: 202.727.6283; ted.gest@dc.gov

Office of the Attorney General Reviewing Superior Court's Judgment in *Odom Wrongful-Imprisonment Case*

Decision Rendered Under Statute that Does Not Cap District's Liability

WASHINGTON, D. C. – Attorney General Karl A. Racine today said that his office was reviewing a decision by D.C. Superior Court Judge Neal Kravitz awarding \$9.15 million dollars to a plaintiff, Kirk Odom, who was wrongfully imprisoned for more than 22 years. The judgment was entered against the District government under the Unjust Imprisonment Act, a law permitting wrongfully-convicted and imprisoned plaintiffs to collect damages from the District without having to prove fault – even when the plaintiff was tried by federal prosecutors.

The District's Unjust Imprisonment Act places no cap on the District's liability for wrongful incarceration. A separate federal law caps the federal government's liability for such cases at \$50,000 per year of wrongful imprisonment. Mr. Odom previously collected \$1.12 million in damages for his wrongful imprisonment from the federal government. The \$9.15 million awarded to Mr. Odom by Judge Kravitz is in addition to the \$1.12 million federal settlement.

"We have great sympathy for Mr. Odom," Attorney General Racine said. **"However, we respectfully believe that the District should not have to pay the amount ordered in a case in which it was not involved in prosecuting or convicting the plaintiff, and in which the federal government has already paid Mr. Odom the maximum amount identified by Congress for his incarceration."**

The case, *Odom v. District of Columbia*, is under review by OAG attorneys. It is Case No. 2013 CA 3239.

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