

November 29, 2007

PRESS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**LOS ANGELES JURY AWARDS \$2.1 MILLION IN FALSE ARREST
CIVIL RIGHTS CASE INVOLVING WALGREENS
AND S&J SECURITY AND INVESTIGATION**

Woman's Attempt to Return Expired Drinks Turn Into Nightmare

On November 28, 2007, in a clear vindication of the rights of California consumers to be free from the abuse of security guards, a Los Angeles Superior Court jury awarded Alicia Benham a total of **\$2.1 million** because she was falsely arrested, incarcerated for a felony, and was threatened with and subjected to violence based on her sex in violation of California's Ralph Civil Rights Act.

On April 17, 2004, Ms. Benham went to Walgreens, located at 6th and Vermont in Los Angeles, California, to exchange diet drinks which were expired and had made her sick. Instead of honoring her request, Walgreens had its security guards take her to a back room where they intimidated and bullied Ms. Benham and her friend by repeatedly insisting they were seen, on a videotape, stealing the drinks from Walgreen's shelf. The evidence at trial showed that security guards were lying as the video tape never showed them stealing and, in fact, Ms. Benham was completely innocent of any crime.

Ms. Benham was falsely arrested by Walgreens' security agent, who threatened and assaulted her while holding her in a small back room of the Walgreens. He made sexually explicit comments and implied that he would let her go if she gave him sexual favors. When she insisted on her innocence and refused to comply with his unlawful demands, he made a citizens arrest and lied to the police that he observed her committing a crime. Ms. Benham was extremely traumatized by the conduct of the security guards and the jury's verdict reflects the harm which was done to her. Ms. Benham would like to use the verdict as a springboard to help others abused by those in authority.

Commenting on the decision, Ms. Benham's attorney, V. James De Simone of SCHONBRUN DESIMONE SEPLOW HARRIS & HOFFMAN, LLP stated: "This is an important victory. Walgreen's security guard was unfit to work because he had a felony record. He not only abused Alicia Benham but he sexually assaulted a thirteen year old girl in another case while working at an Albertson's. Had the security company complied with the law, none of this would have happened."

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Case Name and Number: **Alicia Benham v. Walgreens et al. Case No. BC323316**