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SOLICITORS

Compensation and a letter of apology from Kent Police



“... I am a black male in an environment where people judge our colour before they look at the person.”

Alioune Haynes, once a voluntary diversity advisor who had given talks to Kent Police, won the moral high-ground against that same force when he received an out of court settlement of £8,500 and a letter from Kent Police Assistant Chief Constable Allyn Thomas apologising for their “unjustified” actions.

Peter Walker, from leading Kent law firm Stephens & Son LLP, represented Mr Haynes and was first instructed in 2006, following an incident the previous March,



when he had been arrested outside the Tap’n’Tin pub / nightclub in Chatham. Haynes, a DJ at the club says he felt targeted and had been stopped and searched numerous times in the past. After one such occasion in August 2003 he made a formal complaint against a WPC, which was upheld; the officer was disciplined, Mr Haynes received a formal apology and was offered compensation of £500 – which he rejected.

When, in 2006, he refused the drugs search he was handcuffed, taken to Chatham Police Station and strip-searched, sustaining minor injuries in the process. No drugs were found on Mr Haynes. Afterwards he said he felt his treatment had been “inhumane” and

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that he had been singled out because he was black and had made a previous complaint against a police officer.

A disciplinary hearing in connection with the event and against two officers had been scheduled for June 2008 but was stopped for legal reasons.

Peter Walker said "The police investigations were taking a long time to complete so, in order to progress the matter I made a formal offer to Kent Police, which they rejected. As we had reached an impasse I issued Court proceedings and it was in response to these that the police contacted us to discuss a settlement. Having negotiated the financial settlement there was one condition to Mr Haynes' acceptance – that he receive a letter of apology from Kent Police – which they duly issued."

The letter from Assistant Chief Constable Thomas reads:

"We sincerely regret the physical and emotional injury caused to you during the arrest and subsequent strip search on 25 March 2006 and acknowledge that our actions were unjustified.

Please accept our sincerest apologies in relation to these events and we trust that you can now put the matter behind you."

After receiving the letter Alioune Hayes wrote to Peter Walker saying "..... I walked into your office from off the street as I am, a black male in an environment where people judge our colour before they look at the person. You treated me with the utmost respect the whole time, and never made me feel in any way other than a human being. You fought for me the whole way even when it was tough. You kept your word throughout. I appreciate that and you will always have my respect."

Litigation can be a costly business and it is always advisable to speak to the professionals who can often save everyone time and money.

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