

Cook County & Illinois
JURY VERDICT REPORTER

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CIVIL RIGHTS--RETALIATORY FIRING FOR REFUSAL TO COMMIT PERJURY FOR BOSS
 (XX 12/1) *Jerri Blount v Joseph Stroud, Jovon Broadcasting, WJYS TV 62* 01L-2330 Tried: Nov. 4-21, 2005 (14, 15B)

Verdict: \$3,082,000: \$282,000 compensatory damages (\$257,000 back pay; \$25,000 emotional distress), \$2,800,000 punitive damages.

Judge: Allen S. Goldberg (IL Cook-Law)

Pltf Attys: Martin A. Dolan of *Dolan & Shannon* and Robin B. Potter of *Robin Potter & Associates* Asked: \$11,400,000

Deft Attys: Jerold S. Solovy, Michael T. Brody and Timothy A. Hudson of *Jenner & Block* for all defts (Self-Insured) Offer: none

Pltf F-37 was employed as an account executive for WJYS Channel 62 Television Station when she was terminated in Nov. 2000. Pltf, a seven-year employee, contended she was fired for her refusal to perjure herself and testify falsely to support the station and its owner Joseph Stroud in a sexual harassment and racial discrimination lawsuit filed by a white female co-worker. Pltf, who is black, refused to support requests by Stroud, who is also black, that African-Americans "stick together," after which she was subjected to extreme retaliation by Jovon and Stroud including being told she was "an ignorant nigger" on numerous occasions and that she would "cease to exist." After the termination, Stroud allegedly had his employees call pltf's current employer and defame her, calling her untrustworthy and stating that criminal complaints had been filed against her. Stroud also attempted to have pltf charged with felony eavesdropping for tape recording a meeting. Pltf sought damages for back pay, emotional distress, defamation and retaliation. Defense argued pltf was not terminated for refusing to testify but because she became insubordinate and difficult to work with, as well as allegedly diverting business. Jury found in favor of pltf on the retaliatory discharge count and in favor of defts on defamation and intentional infliction of emotional distress counts. Post-trial motions are pending. NOTE: For a summary of subsequent appellate action regarding this case, see the Jury Verdict Reporter's Appellate Review of Damages publication at 9 ARD 38.