

Orange County, California | February 25, 2025

TUCKER ELLIS ORANGE COUNTY TEAM OBTAINS \$30 MILLION TRIAL VICTORY FOR CLIENT

On February 20, a Tucker Ellis team obtained a significant trial victory for a client in Orange County, California.

In a series of verbal agreements that were never put into writing, our client put 100% of his SCUBA business and related real estate properties in his brother's name, with the understanding his brother would return our client's ownership interests on demand. In 2021, two decades after the first verbal agreement, our client requested the return of his ownership rights. Our client's brother denied any oral agreements, thereby igniting multiple lawsuits.

"Proving to a jury the terms of multiple oral agreements that happened decades ago is an exceedingly challenging task. It is even more difficult when the official corporate documents tell a different story," said [Matt Fletcher](#), who led the Tucker Ellis team. Fletcher added, "our client had a compelling story to tell. That story forced his brother to change his testimony at the last minute and finally admit the truth – the brothers had an oral agreement. This admission made our case that the defendant robbed his own brother."

All efforts to settle the case before trial failed. After a three-week trial, the jury awarded damages to our client of \$9.5 million.

"California has made criminal theft a civil action where the victim can recover three times the damages actually suffered, and the jury agreed the defendant committed theft under Penal Code 496," Fletcher added.

When judgment is entered, our client will receive an award of approximately \$30 million. The jury found that punitive damages should be awarded, and \$9.5 million in punitive damages will be made part of the judgment.

"The amount of the judgment is simply a data point. The emotional impact of the jury's decision was priceless for our client," Fletcher said.

In addition to lead attorney [Matt Fletcher](#), the Tucker Ellis trial team included [Anika Prednis](#) as second chair, with significant support from [Scarlet Rush](#) and paralegal **Lynn Pham**. The rest of the Orange County Hallway also supported the case as needed. [Doug Hedenkamp](#) served as a mock juror to evaluate the closing argument presentation. **Kim Passey** from Trial Support displayed opening and closing statement presentations and extensive video-taped deposition testimony during the trial's evidence phase.

About Tucker Ellis LLP

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