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Landlord Agrees to \$6M Settlement With Woman Assaulted in Phila. Office Building

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What You Need to Know

- The landlord of a Center City Philadelphia office building agreed to a \$6 million settlement with a paralegal who was attacked on its property.
- The plaintiff claimed that the landlord's failure to provide adequate security on its property led to an assault of a paralegal working in the building.
- The defendants had argued that any of the plaintiff's damages were caused solely by her attacker.
- The landlord of a Center City Philadelphia office building agreed to pay \$6 million to resolve claims that its failure to provide adequate security on its property led to an assault of a paralegal
- working in the building.

The case, captioned R.F. v. 211 N. 13th Street Associates, was officially settled Tuesday for the full amount of the defendants' insurance limit, according to plaintiffs counsel.

"The damages here are great because this is probably the worst nightmare that a person can envision happening to them," said Kline & Specter partner Lorraine Donnelly, who represented the plaintiff, referred to as R.F., alongside co-counsel and partner Thomas Kline. "The reality is, but for the negligent security, the attacker couldn't have done what he did. Had proper security been in place, he wouldn't have gotten that far," Donnelly asserted.

Litchfield Cavo partner Robert Sanzo, who represented the defendants, did not respond to requests for comment.

The plaintiff alleged that defendants Belmont Funding, 211 N. 13th Street Associates and North 13 LLC allowed an unauthorized visitor to enter the office building where R.F. worked.

According to the complaint, the unauthorized man accessed the building through the front door by following someone who entered using a key card. He went on to enter a suite on the eighth floor—the office of a small law firm where R.F. was an employee—without being stopped by security, the plaintiff alleged in the complaint.

Once in the suite, the complaint said, the man robbed, physically assaulted, sexually assaulted and raped R.F.

The plaintiff alleged that her attacker left when he heard R.F.'s co-worker return to the office and was able to exit the building without being noticed or stopped by the building's security.

R.F.'s attacker was later apprehended and criminally convicted, but the plaintiff asserted that the attack would not have happened if the building had had sufficient security measures in place.

She alleged that the defendants were negligent by, among other things, failing to employ a sufficient security presence, setting up its security desk in a location without a view of the front doors or stairs, and not having a locked barrier door from the lobby stairs to upper floors.

“Due to the negligence and negligent security of the defendants, R.F. was caused to be brutally assaulted and raped on a weekday in broad daylight on the 8th-floor Center City office space where she worked,” the plaintiff alleged.

In an answer to the plaintiff's complaint, the defendants argued that the plaintiff's attacker was responsible for any damage R.F. sustained.

The defendants contended, “No act or omission of answering defendants was a proximate cause, or cause in fact of any alleged loss, injuries or damages allegedly incurred by plaintiff.”