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## LONG ISLAND

# Racial Beating Case Goes to Jury

By Robin Topping

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The attorney for a black Greenport man who is suing for damages stemming from an allegedly racially motivated beating by Southold town police urged federal jurors yesterday to "fulfill your duty" and "teach them a lesson" by finding the officers involved liable for more than \$2 million in damages.

In summations in Central Islip, Frederick K. Brewington of Hempstead called on the 10-person jury to compensate John Mims for head injuries that rendered him unconscious for two hours on Dec. 3, 1998, and left him with 10 stitches, 18 staples and post-traumatic stress disorder. Brewington asked for \$1.7 million from the department for pain and suffering in addition to \$200,000 each in punitive damages against the two Southold officers who allegedly beat Mims in two separate incidents during December 1998.

But Kevin McMorrow, the attorney for Southold Town, said Officer Steven Zuhoski and Sgt. John Sinning are the real victims in the case. "It's easy to play the race card," McMorrow said, because the inci-

dents involved white police officers. He said the officers used only enough physical force to subdue Mims, who made conscious decisions to resist.

The first incident led to Mims being hospitalized with a concussion after Zuhoski stopped him for allegedly driving a stolen car on Dec. 3, 1998. The second took place on Dec. 16, 1998, when police went to Mims' home with a warrant on drug charges and chased him down when he panicked and ran. Charges against Mims in both incidents were later dropped.

Brewington said that during the Dec. 16 incident, police said Mims was on his back with his hands cuffed in front. But Brewington cited the testimony of defense witness Anthony Claudio, who said Mims was face down with his hands in back, as he has claimed in court. McMorrow dismissed the discrepancy and cited contradictions in Mims' statements.

During summations before U.S. District Judge Arthur Spatt, every courtroom seat was filled, with Greenport residents and NAACP officials on one side and Southold police officers and their families on the other. Jurors began deliberations yesterday and are to continue today.