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**\*\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\*\***

## ***Legal Aid Secures Dismissal for Jason Serrano, Client Targeted by NYPD Marijuana Planting Scheme During Routine Traffic Stop***

(NEW YORK, NY) - **The Legal Aid Society** secured a dismissal of charges for Jason Serrano, a Legal Aid client who was the target of a New York City Police Department (NYPD) marijuana planting scheme during a routine traffic stop in March 2018. Last week, New York City Criminal Court Judge Tamiko Amaker issued a [ruling vacating](#) Mr. Serrano's conviction and referred the case back to criminal court for a retrial.

“Albeit a day late and a dollar short, we appreciate that District Attorney Michal McMahon dismissed these charges against Mr. Serrano given the overwhelming evidence supporting his innocence,” said **Marion Elizabeth Campbell, Staff Attorney with the Staten Island Trial Office at The Legal Aid Society**. “However, we remain disappointed that the NYPD and DA have failed to hold the officers accountable for their corrupt and criminal misconduct. According to the DA's office, the only discipline either of the officers involved in this case received was the benefit of additional training. Neither officer was disciplined, fired, nor prosecuted for planting evidence on innocent people and then lying in police reports and sworn statements used in court. The culture of impunity will continue to thrive at precincts so long as officers who betray the public's trust aren't held accountable.”

### **Background:**

The NYPD officers involved - Kyle Erickson and Elmer Pastran - were accused of similarly unlawful tactics in a *New York Times* [exposé](#). The charges brought in that case against another Legal Aid client – Lasou Kuyateh – were ultimately dismissed.

The Legal Aid Society represented Mr. Serrano in the criminal case arising from the stop, and, because New York's previous discovery laws did not require the immediate disclosure of police body-worn camera footage, Mr. Serrano and his attorneys were completely unaware that documented evidence of the police misconduct existed. Without access to this critical information, Mr. Serrano eventually pleaded guilty to resisting arrest and other low-level charges to avoid pretrial detention at Rikers Island.

Full BWC video of marijuana planting scheme:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cHf2-e6PurA>

Additional footage of officers planting marijuana:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fs\\_jDqVmNSU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fs_jDqVmNSU)

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*The Legal Aid Society exists for one simple yet powerful reason: to ensure that New Yorkers are not denied their right to equal justice because of poverty. For 145 years, we have protected, defended, and advocated for those who have struggled in silence for far too long. Every day, in every borough, The Legal Aid Society changes the lives of our clients and helps improve our communities. [www.legalaidnyc.org](http://www.legalaidnyc.org)*