

## Our Thinking: Press Releases

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Mass Torts & Class Actions

## Class action lawsuit details numerous civil rights violations at jail in St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana

March 23, 2020

National civil rights law firm Romanucci & Blandin, LLC along with Jacob Litigation, Inc. announce the filing of a class action lawsuit on behalf of Ahmed Baqer, Klabert Joseph Guillot, Jr., Klabert Joseph Guillot, Sr., and other detainees of the St. Tammany Parish Jail in St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana. The lawsuit details numerous violations of the civil rights guaranteed by the 14th Amendment of the United States Constitution and the laws of the State of Louisiana. The plaintiffs – who were pre-trial detainees and not convicted of any crime - were held in a filthy, cramped holding cell that was 10 feet by 20 feet and filled with up to 24 people. Plaintiffs were held in conditions that were cruel and unusual, denied access to basic hygiene, forced to sleep on filthy concrete floors, often without blankets, and not allowed space or time for any exercise. Furthermore, some detainees were held in these conditions for 16 days, while state law mandates that inmates be moved into regular housing after 48 hours.

The federal lawsuit was filed March 22, 2020, in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana. Defendants in the lawsuit include the St. Tammany Parish Government, St. Tammany Parish Sheriff's Office, current Sheriff Randy Smith, former Sheriff Rodney J. "Jack" Strain and others.

The treatment of the plaintiffs in this holding cell violates the legal minimum standards for Louisiana jails which include the basic sanitation of cells, clean linens upon admission, daily showers and access to medicine and healthcare, as needed. One hour of daily recreation is also required. The law clearly states that inmates shall not be deprived of food, clothing or personal hygiene as a punishment.

"With this lawsuit, we intend to bring justice to all of the individuals who have been treated worse than animals by the St. Tammany Parish Jail and those who run it," said co-lead counsel Antonio Romanucci of Romanucci & Blandin, LLC. "The conditions in that holding cell have been – and continue to be - stunning violations of the civil rights of these people who have not been convicted of any crimes and are presumed innocent."

"The conditions inside this facility are abhorrent at any time, but are particularly concerning now in the era of social distancing and COVID-19. The St. Tammany facility has plenty of available cells for inmates. Packing people into a holding cell creates significant risk of spreading the COVID-19 virus and endangers the broader public when those detainees return home. Furthermore, it also presents a serious risk to the staff at the jail, along with their friends and families," said co-lead counsel Devon Jacob of Jacob Litigation.

Attached photos were sourced from official St. Tammany Parish Jail video.

***About Romanucci & Blandin, LLC***

Romanucci & Blandin is a national trial practice committed to fighting for victims of negligence, abuse and wrongful death arising from police misconduct, corporate negligence, civil rights actions, medical malpractice, mass torts and class actions. The attorneys' steadfast commitment to fighting for those seeking justice around the country has helped the firm obtain multiple verdicts and settlements in the millions of dollars. The Chicago-based personal injury lawyers are dedicated to providing victims who suffered injury as a result of another's wrongdoing full and fair compensation in a diligent, professional, skilled and caring manner. The lawyers actively support their communities and provide advocacy at the national, state and local levels on issues that support the U.S. tort system. Founded in 1998, Romanucci & Blandin is widely recognized for representing plaintiffs in numerous practice areas including: personal injury, wrongful death, medical malpractice, workers' compensation, pharmaceutical, mass torts, civil rights, police misconduct, excessive force, aviation, product liability and premises liability. For more information about Romanucci & Blandin, please visit [www.rblaw.net](http://www.rblaw.net) or call (312) 458-1000.

***About Jacob Litigation, Inc.***

Jacob Litigation is a national civil rights law firm serving persons who have experienced police brutality, and the estates of persons who have been unlawfully killed by law enforcement personnel. Jacob Litigation is owned and operated by Attorney Devon M. Jacob, who is a former police officer and a former Pennsylvania Deputy Attorney General. Jacob Litigation represents persons who have been wrongfully convicted and incarcerated. Jacob Litigation also represents the estates of persons who have been unlawfully killed by others (i.e., cellmate) or themselves while in the care and supervision of law enforcement or correctional personnel. For more information about Attorney Devon M. Jacob or Jacob Litigation, Inc., please visit [www.JacobLitigation.com](http://www.JacobLitigation.com) or call (717) 796-7733.

***About The Glorioso Law Firm***

The Glorioso Law Firm defends the Constitutional rights of and seeks justice for individuals who have been injured or died because of medical, corporate, governmental or individual negligence and wrongdoing. With over 90 years combined experience, The Glorioso Law Firm has been the fighting voice for families from all over the world. The Glorioso Law Firm is primarily based out of New Orleans, LA, and handles cases all over the state of Louisiana. For more information, please visit [www.thegloriosolawfirm.com](http://www.thegloriosolawfirm.com) or call (504) 569-9999.