

HANKIN SANDMAN & PALLADINO ATTORNEY COLIN G. BELL, ESQ. OBTAINS
\$250,000.00 DEFAMATION VERDICT FOR NJ STATE TROOPER FALSELY
ACCUSED OF WRONGDOING

(Atlantic City) After a trial that began February 25, 2013, an Atlantic County jury today returned a verdict totaling \$250,000.00 in favor of New Jersey State Trooper Jaime Ablett after finding that he was the subject of a false accusation of wrongdoing. Ablett was represented at trial by Colin G. Bell, Esquire of the firm Hankin Sandman & Palladino, with offices in Atlantic City and Cape May Court House, New Jersey.

The facts at trial established that on May 2, 2009, Mr. Ablett left a wedding reception at the 5 Points Inn in Buena Vista Township in a vehicle driven by his wife. Mr. Ablett's car was involved in an accident when a vehicle driven by Dana Scarpine lost control, spun out and slammed into the driver's side door where Mrs. Ablett was sitting. Both Mr. and Mrs. Ablett suffered injuries as a result of the accident.

The jury found that an acquaintance of Ms. Scarpine's, Kristen McGee of Vineland, who was working at the 5 Points that evening but did not witness the accident, later falsely claimed that Mr. Ablett was the actual driver of the vehicle and switched seats with his wife after the accident. On May 29, 2009, her father, Dennis McGee of Vineland, called the New Jersey State Police Office of Professional Standards. During a recorded phone call, he reported that Mr. Ablett was intoxicated, was "flagged" at the bar due to his high level of intoxication, and that Kristen McGee had actually observed Mr. Ablett switch seats with his wife after the accident.

As a result, the State Police conducted an internal affairs investigation of Mr. Ablett. After a year long investigation into the incident, the State Police found the accusation "unfounded" and cleared Mr. Ablett of any wrongdoing.

Eye witness testimony at the trial demonstrated that Mr. Ablett was not intoxicated, was not "flagged," and did not switch seats after the accident. The jury's verdict confirmed that Mr. Ablett had proven that the accusations against him were false. The jury further awarded damages of \$25,000 against Kristen McGee and \$225,000 against Dennis McGee.