

# SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC DEFENDER

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## WHEN "REALITIES" COLLIDE, THERE IS REASONABLE DOUBT

*San Francisco, CA* — A young man was acquitted of attempted murder charges on February 17, 2012, San Francisco Public Defender Jeff Adachi announced.

Terence Singleton, 25, was acquitted of attempted murder charges. If convicted of the original charges, he would have been sentenced to life in prison. Instead, the jury deliberated for only an hour before finding him not guilty of the charges.

This was a case which looked pretty awful for Singleton until the complaining witness, his girlfriend, walked into the Public Defender's Office and spoke with Singleton's attorney, Qiana Washington, and gave a lengthy recorded statement admitting to fabricating the story to police. At trial, the complaining witness refused to testify under advice of her attorney.

Instead of being a hapless victim to a vicious attack, she had brought a gun along to add weight to her argument that Singleton should turn some money over to her. Instead of being shot at by Singleton, she admitted to trying to cock the gun to threaten him. When the gun jammed, she threw it on the ground and it discharged.

She promptly hotfooted it to the police station to make sure her version of events got in before her boyfriend got a chance to. Much like a game of tag, the first person to give a statement wins. The police arrested Singleton for attempted murder.

Learning the gravity of the charges filed against Singleton, she admitted to the police that she had lied. They threatened to charge her with filing a false police report and report her to CPS. As a result, she came to the Public Defender and told the truth.

Subsequent investigations indicated that she has a history of domestic violence and other unprovoked attacks.

Defense attorney Qiana Washington thoroughly prepared her case and subpoenaed witnesses including a police officer who testified about an incident in which the complaining witness had stabbed a previous boyfriend. Washington also presented audio of the confession by the complaining witness.

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The jury took a look at the Rashomon-like competing realities and concluded there was more than enough reasonable doubt to drop the charges against our client.

"This was a living nightmare for my client, who could have faced life in prison for a crime that was manufactured from the complaining witness' false statements," said Singleton's attorney, Qiana Washington.

Adachi said the case highlights the importance of jurors weighing all the available information so that they can assess the credibility of witnesses.

"We were fortunate in this case that there was a voluntary statement by the alleged victim which contradicted her earlier statement to police." Adachi said.

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