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**(l-r) Drew Beal and  
Milinda Brown, of Beal  
Sutherland Berlin &  
Brown, and L. Lin Wood  
of L. Lin Wood P.C.  
Courtesy photos**

## NEWS

# Fulton Jury Returns \$11.4M Verdict Against Lawyer Lin Wood

Litigators with Beal, Sutherland, Berlin & Brown detail the steps they took to obtain an \$11.4 million verdict against former attorney Lin Wood following the passage of Georgia's new tort reform law.

May 28, 2025 at 11:34 AM

🕒 6 minute read

Law Firm Bankruptcy and Dissolution

**By Cedra Mayfield**

Litigation Reporter

**What You Need to Know****TRENDING**

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Fulton County Superior Court jury returns \$11.4 million verdict against former Atlanta attorney Lin Wood.
- Eight-figure outcome obtained by plaintiff counsel with Beal, Sutherland, Berlin & Brown following passage of Georgia Tort Reform law.
- Verdict comes less than a year after federal jury returned \$4.5 million verdict against Wood for accusing former Wade Grunberg & Wilson colleagues of committing extortion in online comments.

Litigators with Beal, Sutherland, Berlin & Brown have convinced a Fulton County Superior Court jury to return an \$11.4 million verdict against former Atlanta attorney Lucian Lincoln "Lin" Wood Jr. for breach of contract and fraud.

As plaintiff counsel break down how they navigated recent tort reform legislation to achieve the eight-figure outcome, the pro se defendant explains why the five-year-long dispute might not be over yet.

### 'A Poison Pill'

On May 15, Beal, Sutherland, Berlin & Brown partners Drew Beal and Milinda Brown concluded a two-week jury trial with an \$11.4 million verdict against Wood,

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formerly known for being a pro-Trump defamation attorney.

Plaintiff counsel represented Wood's former Wade, Grunberg & Wilson colleagues Jonathan Grunberg, Nicole Wade and Taylor Wilson in seeking fees under a settlement agreement entered into when the parties closed the firm and concluded its affairs.

With Wood and his professional corporation, L. Lin Wood P.C., named as defendants, the plaintiffs filed a breach-of-contract complaint in August 2020.

In addition to citing nonpayment under the settlement agreement, the complaint cited a breach of the agreement's nondisparagement clause, based on numerous derogatory posts Wood made on social media.

The complaint also alleged fraud based on emails from Wood to another attorney. In the emails, plaintiff counsel said Wood indicated he would not pay the plaintiffs their share of a substantial fee addressed in the settlement agreement.



**From top left: (clockwise) L. Lin Wood of L. Lin Wood P.C. & Nicole Jennings Wade, G. Taylor Wilson and Jonathan D. Grunberg of Wade Grunberg & Wilson. ALM/Courtesy photos**

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NEW YORK LAW JOURNAL

Andrew Beal

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"Defendants' stated position for breaching the Settlement Agreement is that the individual Plaintiffs 'were not in Lin's firm [LLW PC] at any time relevant' to the cases addressed in the Settlement Agreement but only 'shared office space and worked on cases with LLWPC,' and, thus, client consent is required to split fees with said Plaintiffs pursuant to Georgia Rule of Professional Conduct 1.5," the complaint alleged. "It is now clear that Defendants committed fraud because they never intended to pay the majority of the money they owe to Plaintiffs under the Settlement Agreement. Defendants fraudulent intent is evidenced in their first draft of the Settlement Agreement which contained a false recital that was a poison pill, as it mirrors Defendants now stated reason for breaching the contract: 'Nicole Wade, Jonathan Grunberg, and Taylor Wilson and L. Lin Wood, P.C. are lawyers who practiced law, co-counseled cases, and shared office space together.'"

### **READ: COMPLAINT**

The dispute escalated to the Georgia Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court of Georgia before returning to the Atlanta Judicial Circuit Superior Court for a jury trial on May 6.

## **'One of the Most Effective Trial Tools'**

Gathered before Judge Scott McAfee, plaintiff counsel centered their trial strategy on streamlining a document-

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**Judge Scott McAfee of Fulton County Superior Court.**  
**Courtesy photo**

heavy case.

"We believe one of the most effective trial tools was the plaintiffs' extensive PowerPoint timeline, presented during closing arguments," Beal told the Daily Report. "It laid out the evidence clearly,

showing the defendants' evolving plan over many months."

In addition to visual elements, the plaintiff team also deployed evidence aimed at capturing the jury's audible attention.

"The jury heard Wood's own words from numerous voicemails, emails and text messages sent to the plaintiffs over the years," Brown said. "They also viewed the videotaped evidentiary deposition of the Kentucky attorney with whom Wood had communicated, as well as the Kentucky client whose case gave rise to the disputed fee."

### **WATCH: TRIAL DAY 1**

## 2020CV339937 Wade, Grunberg, Wilson v. Wood Trial



Across the aisle, Wood represented himself, with the aid of Atlanta attorney John Exum.

In a consolidated pre-trial order, the defendant argued that the dispute arose "from the Plaintiffs' improper and baseless attempts to recover funds to which they are not entitled under a Settlement Agreement and General Release executed on March 17, 2020."

"Defendants further assert that the Plaintiffs' claims are without merit, legally and factually deficient, and designed to harass and disparage the Defendants," read Wood's defense brief. "Defendants also object to the admissibility of any discussions or communications between the parties prior to the SAGR, which contained a merger clause."

**READ: CONSOLIDATED PRE-TRIAL ORDER**

**'Closing Had to Lay a Very Complete**

## Foundation'



**(L-R) Drew Beal and Milinda Brown of Beal Sutherland Berlin & Brown. Courtesy photo**

After two weeks of trial, plaintiff counsel said it took the jury two hours to deliberate before returning a verdict in favor of their clients.

In addition to awarding \$1,034,199.99 in contract damages, plaintiff counsel said the jury awarded

\$750,000 in damages for breach of the nondisparagement clause and \$3,368,400 in fraud damages. The verdict also included \$1,292,777 in attorneys' fees and \$5 million in punitive damages, under a finding of specific intent to harm.

"We are very pleased with the verdict, as the jury gave us everything we asked for," Beal said.

Brown added that the plaintiffs felt "vindicated after this five-year struggle."

**READ: VERDICT**





Plaintiff counsel secured the eight-figure verdict on the heels of Kemp signing tort reform legislation into law. The duo credited their ability to achieve the outcome, in part, to the timing of their damages request. Beal and Brown pointed out that the new tort reform bill prevented the plaintiffs from stating an amount they would be seeking before or during the trial.

"As a result, the closing had to lay a very complete foundation for all damages claimed, which was not an impediment for the plaintiffs," Beal said.

The duo applauded McAfee for his "excellent job maintaining order during a lengthy and complex case with hundreds of documents and very high emotions."

However, when the Daily Report reached Wood for comment about the verdict, the defendant suggested the legal matter might not be over yet.

"I was disappointed but not surprised by the verdict," Wood said. "I predicted it publicly before the trial even started because I knew I was before a freemason tribunal, and I publicly advocate against freemasonry. I will aggressively pursue an appeal of this unjust and unlawful verdict."

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