

## **8. BASIS OF CLAIM; 9. PROPERTY DAMAGE; 10. PERSONAL INJURY**

My name is George Retes, Jr. I am a 25-year-old resident of Ventura, California. I am a United States citizen, born in Ventura. I have never been arrested or charged with anything more than a traffic violation. I am an Army veteran, husband, and father. While serving in the military, I was stationed for a while at Fort Wainwright in Fairbanks, Alaska, and I served a tour in Kirkuk, Iraq, during rocket attacks by Iran-backed militias. I was honorably discharged in 2022.

After moving back to Ventura, I began working for Securitas, a national company that provides security guard and patrol services. I was assigned to work as a security guard at a farming facility (Glass House Farms) in Camarillo, California. There my job was to man a guard shack, letting employees and invitees onto the property and keeping trespassers out.

On Thursday, July 10, 2025, at approximately 2:30 in the afternoon, I was on my way to work an afternoon-to-evening shift I had been assigned. When I left home, I did not know that anything unusual was happening at the farm or near it. But as I turned onto Laguna Road, the last road leading to the farm's entrance where I work, I saw that the road was backed up with cars and pedestrians. Some appeared to be protesting and some appeared to be reporters, photographers, or journalists. I did not see any of these people behaving violently. I slowly drove around them until I came to a row of federal agents standing across the road, blocking my path. I think they were Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents.

I exited my vehicle and explained to the officers that I am a U.S. citizen, was not a protester, and was simply trying to get to work at the farm, where I work as a security guard. I had my driver's license with me in the car, but no officers showed interest in confirming I was who I said I was. No officers suggested that I was suspected of any crime or immigration offense. But they also did not let me pass to get to work. One told me to go home. I did not want to go home and lose the afternoon work shift that I had finally secured after having to work nights. Seconds later, though, the row of officers started walking forward, toward me and the demonstrators and others. I got back into my car. Officers gave me conflicting orders: to back up my vehicle and to exit it. Trying to comply, I slowly backed up my vehicle.

Officers deployed tear-gas cannisters on the road behind my vehicle to get the protesters and others to retreat. As I backed up my vehicle, it went into a cloud of tear gas. I could no longer see to drive, and it was difficult to breathe. An armored vehicle, vans, and a bus (possibly carrying detainees accused of immigration crimes) passed me and my vehicle on the road, heading away from the farm.

An officer then broke my driver's side window with his firearm, shattering the glass. The glass went onto me and cut my thigh. An officer reached into my car through the broken window and sprayed me with pepper spray. It burned my skin and eyes and made it hard to breathe.

An officer pulled me from the vehicle onto the ground, ripping skin off my elbow and foot. While lying on my stomach, I put my hands behind my back to show that I was not resisting and was not a threat. One officer put a knee on my back. Another officer put a knee on my neck. Officers eventually pulled me up off the ground, zip-tied my hands together, walked me to the farm, and ordered me to sit on the dirt on the side of the road. Officers with the Federal Bureau of Investigation were at the farm, along with ICE agents.

I sat on the dirt ground for about three to four hours with my hands zip-tied. While I sat there, an officer asked me if I had my wallet on me. I explained that my wallet was in my car, in the center console, but nobody went to get it.

I again explained to officers that I am a U.S. citizen, was not protesting, and was simply trying to get to work. I told them that I am a veteran and work as a security guard at the farm, and I asked why I was being detained. I was given no answers.

I was then placed in an unmarked SUV along with another U.S. citizen. Two agents were in the vehicle, too. We went to Port Hueneme, where officers took my fingerprints and picture and placed me in handcuffs and leg shackles. I think the officers were Department of Homeland Security agents. Officers with the Federal Bureau of Investigation were also there. While at the port, an officer gave me warnings about certain rights and asked me about why ICE agents had detained me. I said that I would like to know the answer to that question, too. I asked to make a phone call and talk with an attorney, and I asked why I was still detained and when I would be released. I was not allowed to make a phone call, speak with an attorney, or wash the pepper spray from my body. I was not told why I was detained or when I would be released.

Later in the evening, I was transported, without any other detainees in the same vehicle, to the federal Metropolitan Detention Center in Los Angeles. I arrived there between 9 and 10 p.m. There I was strip-searched, fingerprinted, photographed, and given a jail uniform to wear. I kept asking questions about why I was detained, when I would be released, and whether I could make a phone call and talk with an attorney. I also explained that my daughter's third birthday party was on Saturday, and it was very important for me to be there. I was again given no answers, was not allowed to make a phone call, speak with an attorney, see a judge, or take a shower. The pepper spray continued to burn my skin. I tried to relieve the pain by putting water in sandwich bags given to me that evening (with a meal of sandwiches) and soaking my hands in the water. It did not help much. I hardly slept that night, as I was in pain and distress about being locked up inexplicably.

The next morning (Friday), I underwent medical screening and a psychological evaluation. I was distressed about being locked up for no good reason with no idea whether or when I would be released. My daughter's birthday party was the next day; I was going to miss it. I was placed on suicide watch.

I continued to ask about why I was detained and asked to make a phone call and talk with an attorney. I got the same nonresponse. Again I saw no judge and was not allowed to shower, so the pepper spray remained on my body.

Again the next day (Saturday), I saw no judge, was not allowed to make a phone call or speak with an attorney, and was not allowed to take a shower.

The next day (Sunday) an officer informed me that I was going to be off suicide watch and would be released. That afternoon, I was escorted downstairs, given my clothes, phone, piercings, and watch, and released. I was given a document that says “CBP Form 6051D” and “Department of Homeland Security U.S. Customs and Border Protection Detention Notice and Custody Receipt for Detained Property.” It lists as the “reason for detention” only “detained pursuant to arrest.” I was told that there were no charges against me.

I called my wife, who picked me up and took me home to the rest of my family. My wife and sister had retrieved my vehicle on Friday from the side of Laguna Road, where officers had left it unsecured. My keys and wallet were still inside.

The experience was physically and psychologically abusive and traumatic. I was detained for three days and three nights without reason and without explanation. During that time, I was violently and unjustifiably assaulted, pepper sprayed, handcuffed, shackled, transported twice, strip-searched, booked in jail, treated like a violent criminal, deprived of a shower, and denied basic civil rights. I was not allowed to call my family, who—not knowing where I was—frantically searched for me. I was not allowed to see a judge or talk with an attorney. I was not allowed to call my boss to explain that I was literally tied up and unable to come to work, by no fault of my own.

As described above, my injuries include psychological and emotional distress, the violation of my civil rights, physical damage to my body, and property damage to my car. I also lost wages from the shifts I could not work because of my detention. My employer treated my absence on July 10 as a no-call-no-show and required me to demonstrate the absence of charges against me before returning to work. The wrongs I suffered damaged my reputation as an employee. From my time in the military, I have Post-Traumatic-Stress-Disorder and herniated disks in my neck. This experience has exacerbated those injuries.

Fixing my car window cost approximately \$450. The vehicle’s interior continues to smell from the pepper spray, which got into the vents and on the seats and other surfaces. Online sources indicate the cost for remediation will be approximately \$500–\$1,500. The vehicle can be inspected at my residence.

As an American who served my country, who always tries to follow the law, and who has never had any run-ins with police, such violent and cruel treatment by public servants is appalling and, frankly, un-American.