



GPM Pro Bono Team Wins Asylum for Wrongfully Detained Client

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MINNEAPOLIS (April 28, 2016) - A GPM team, including attorneys Matthew Webster, Ashley Bailey, and Wade Hauser, recently won asylum for a client who was detained for weeks in the county jail despite his eligibility for asylum.

B.H. was originally from Somalia, where he and his wife experienced significant persecution because they belonged to a minority clan and opposed Al-Shabaab. B.H.'s wife experienced FGM at an early age. More recently, a local Al-Shabaab leader kidnapped B.H.'s wife and intended to force her into divorcing B.H. and marrying him. B.H. was also kidnapped and beaten to coerce him into agreeing to the divorce.

B.H. and his wife escaped Somalia by using false identification documents and paying a smuggler. They arrived in Texas by a circuitous route through Ethiopia, Brazil, Cuba, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, and Mexico. Upon arrival, they both claimed asylum. Although B.H.'s wife was quickly granted asylum, B.H. was denied bail, was transferred to Minnesota, and was detained for weeks at the Sherburne County Jail before GPM got the case.

In preparing for B.H.'s asylum case, it became clear to the GPM team that B.H.'s best claim was derivative—meaning through his wife's asylum application. The GPM team prepared B.H. for his upcoming individual asylum hearing and fielded several collect calls from the county jail. The GPM Team then reached out to the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) attorneys to discuss whether they would be willing to stipulate to B.H.'s derivative status. Within a day, ICE released B.H. from custody and connected him with a nonprofit in Albert Lea that arranged for him to travel by AmTrak to his wife in Washington.

B.H. and his wife were overjoyed to be reunited and to have B.H. out of jail. They are now starting their new lives in Washington state and have made several calls to express their gratitude for GPM's assistance. Those calls, however, no longer needed to be made collect.

Gray Plant Mooty is deeply committed to community service. Read more about the firm's pro bono work.