

DETROIT: ASSAULT VICTIM WINS \$ 2.6 MILLION - OFFENDER IS CITY CLEANUP LEADER, MAYOR'S PAL

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It took a Wayne County Circuit Court jury less than four hours Wednesday to award \$ **2.6 million** to a man pistol-whipped by Bobby Ferguson, a leader of Detroit's volunteer cleanup effort and one of Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick's best friends.

Kennedy Thomas, a former employee of Ferguson's construction firm, won a unanimous jury verdict in a trial that began Oct. 2. He suffers dizziness, has seizures and has walked with a cane since Ferguson assaulted him more than three years ago.

Ferguson claimed he believed Thomas was having an affair with his wife. Ferguson's attorney said Ferguson hit Thomas with an ashtray after Thomas admitted to the affair and threw a camera at Ferguson. Thomas denied any affair.

Thomas' lawyer, David Robinson, said Ferguson had no credibility.

Ferguson had testified that he believed his **assault** was not a crime. Nevertheless, he pleaded guilty in 2005 to a charge of **assault** with intent to do great bodily harm and was sentenced to 10 months in jail and 5 years' probation. Kilpatrick visited Ferguson in jail, but did not testify during the trial.

When asked on the witness stand if Kilpatrick was a friend, Ferguson replied: "Can you explain to me what a friend means?"

Just a month before, in the same courthouse, Kilpatrick had testified in an unrelated trial that he has known Ferguson since 1997 and that the city contractor got him interested in riding motorcycles.

After taking office in 2002, Kilpatrick named Ferguson as a top adviser in efforts to clean up Detroit.

Ferguson's attorney, Avery Williams, did not return an e-mail seeking comment.

Thomas' mother, Cynthia Thomas, said her son now can focus on raising his family.

"Kennedy had a chance to be vindicated in what he said happened, and Bobby finally got the only justice that he knows, and that's financial," she said.

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