

He wins \$5M in suit vs. TA

BY DON SINGLETON
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

THE TRANSIT Authority has been ordered to pay \$5 million to a paralyzed Brooklyn man who suffered injuries when he was thrown from his wheelchair while riding on a city bus, the Daily News has learned.

Ashraff Ali, 40, was awarded the damages by a state Supreme Court jury after his lawyer successfully argued that the bus driver had failed to properly secure the wheelchair.

Ali had been fighting his case for nearly a decade, filing suit against the TA in Brooklyn after the incident occurred.

According to trial testimony, Ali boarded the bus in his wheelchair on Nov. 25, 1996, with the aid of a handicap accessible lift.

The bus driver is responsible for securing wheelchair-bound passengers, but Ali said his driver used only one of four available safety straps to anchor the chair in place.

During the trip, the bus suddenly veered to the right and Ali's wheelchair came loose from its moorings, causing him to fall forward.

When he hit the floor of the bus, Ali sustained extensive damage to his left shoulder and was taken to Coney Island Hospital. He was later transferred to a rehabilitation facility, where he was hospitalized for six months.

During the two-week trial before Justice Arthur Schack, the bus driver conceded that he had used only two of four available straps to secure the wheelchair.

Ali's internist testified that the accident effectively turned him from a paraplegic to a "triple amputee," lacking the use of three extremities.

Following three hours of deliberation, an all-female jury awarded Ali a total of \$5,139,075 on March 23, a verdict made public last week by the Web site Verdictsearch.com.

Neither Ali nor his lawyer, Steven Hess, could not be reached for comment.

Transit Authority spokesman Charles Seaton said the authority would have no comment on the case pending appeal.

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"Scary
contin
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Easter

BY DAVID HINCH
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APPARENTLY, it's not just critics who think the "Scary Movie" series has raked in thrills.

"Scary Movie 4" is the biggest Easter opening in Hollywood history this year, racking up \$41 million in its first weekend, dethroning "Ice Age: The Meltdown" from the top office charts.

"Ice Age" was having a rough time, having been pulled in by \$20 million to run through its third weekend, leaving it with a total of \$147.2 million.

But "Scary Movie 4" is expected to do some of the ads

A new comedy from the director of ABOUT A BOY, IN GOOD COMPANY and AMERICAN PIE

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