

## Wrongly jailed for rape, he gets \$13.6M

By SUE REINERT

The Patriot Ledger

A federal judge has awarded \$13.6 million to a Bolton man wrongly convicted of rape who served almost 10 years in prison. Eric Sarsfield, 43, was convicted in 1987 of raping a Marlboro woman and sentenced to 10 to 15 years. In 2000, a state judge threw out his conviction because he was innocent.

Sarsfield sued Marlboro and several police officers, alleging police falsely said he made an incriminating statement, showed the victim only photos of Sarsfield, and ignored the fact that he had no tattoo, as the victim described her attacker.

U.S. District Court Judge Rya

Zobel yesterday ruled that Sarsfield is entitled to \$13 million for pain and suffering and \$655,940 for economic losses.

A psychiatrist testified that he suffered from phobia and panic disorder that prevent him from socializing and traveling and have also caused physical ailments. His problems heightened when a Bolton police officer insisted he register as a sex offender after his exoneration, and threatened to arrest him if he refused, Zobel said.

"It is, of course, impossible to make (Sarsfield) whole and to give back to him his lost liberty, the time he lost from ordinary life, and his emotional and physical health," Zobel said in her decision.