

Man shot by police awarded \$275,000

By John Dobberstein
Staff writer

A federal jury awarded a Harvey man \$275,000 in damages Thursday for an incident five years ago in which he was shot in the buttocks by police.

The jury found the city of Harvey and former police officer Manuel Escalante liable for both the shooting and the injuries suffered by Archie Robinson of Harvey.

Robinson's attorney, John Loevy, said Harvey police planted a "dropped gun" on Robinson and claimed he pointed a gun at police to justify the shooting outside an apartment complex on Sept. 7, 1997.

Jurors deliberated all day Wednesday and part of Thursday before issuing their verdict, which includes \$25,000 in compensation for Robinson's injuries and \$250,000 in punitive damages against the city and Escalante.

The shooting was ruled justified after the incident was reviewed by Illinois State Police and the Cook County state's attorney's office. Loevy said all investigators did was "white-wash" the case.

"The system in Illinois for

reviewing police shootings is absolutely broken," Loevy said. "His prints weren't on the gun and he insisted he never had a gun and he never pointed one at the police officer."

Harvey's attorneys argued there was a wealth of evidence showing Robinson had a gun. One of the attorneys, Elizabeth Budzinski, declined to comment on the verdict Wednesday afternoon. A second, Tom DiCianni, was not available for comment.

A source said a court hearing is planned to discuss the punitive damages, and the city's lawyers plan to appeal the verdict.

The day of the shooting, around 9 p.m., Robinson, then 19 years old, was standing outside an apartment complex in Harvey with some other friends when Escalante stopped his unmarked police car and got out.

According to a complaint filed by Loevy, one of Robinson's friends began running away and Robinson ran after him. The complaint said Escalante gave chase and shot Robinson in the buttocks as he was climbing over a fence. Robinson fell and suffered serious injuries, the complaint said.