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HAITIAN COMMUNITY

\$4.3M awarded in torture case

■ A Miami federal jury awarded two plaintiffs \$4.3 million in a case against a former Haitian military officer accused of human rights violations in the 1990s.

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A Miami federal jury decided Friday that former Haitian army Col. Carl Dorelien — who once won \$3.2 million in the Florida Lottery — is financially liable for the



DORELIEEN

1993 torture of a former Port-au-Prince labor leader and the 1994 death of a Haitian resident during a neighborhood massacre.

After deliberating for two hours and 15 minutes, the four women and two men jurors awarded \$4.3 million to the plaintiffs — \$2.5 million to former labor leader Lex-

uste Cajuste and \$1.8 million to Marie Jeanne Jean, the widow of Raboteau massacre victim Michel Pierre.

The verdict came at the end of a four-day civil trial stemming from a lawsuit the Center for Justice & Accountability filed on behalf of Cajuste and Jean. The trial was the latest in a string of civil actions initiated by the San Francisco human rights group against foreign-born torture suspects.

"I am very proud," Jean said out-

side the courthouse downtown. "Finally, today I saw justice."

Cajuste said: "My wish is that one day the people of Haiti also will achieve justice. I am only one person among an entire population who suffered abuses."

Dorelien was not in the courtroom during the entire trial. U.S. authorities deported him to Haiti in 2003 after an immigration judge found him to be a human rights

•TURN TO DORELIEEN, 5B

HAITIAN COMMUNITY

Ex-Haitian officer liable for torture

•DORELIEEN, FROM 1B

violator.

Kurt Klaus, Dorelien's civil attorney, could not be reached after the verdict. Earlier in court, he indicated that he planned to appeal if his client lost.

The jurors left immediately after the verdict, but three who were approached by The Miami Herald outside the courthouse declined to comment.

If upheld on appeal, the plaintiffs are not likely to collect the \$4.3 million judgment. Dorelien has about \$808,000 left from his lottery jackpot, but it was frozen in an account after a Tallahassee circuit judge ruled against Dorelien last year in a sepa-

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rate lawsuit. In that case, the jackpot money was awarded to Jean and other Raboteau massacre survivors. Dorelien has appealed that ruling.

The jurors got the Miami case after attorneys for the plaintiffs and Dorelien portrayed the former Haitian officer in radically different terms.

He was part of "a small group of arrogant, brutal" military men who overthrew

Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 1991 and then used the Haitian armed forces to persecute innocent civilians, Dwayne E. Williams, a Holland & Knight attorney, told the jurors. Williams helped the center represent Cajuste and Jean.

"My client didn't have any control over what happened," Klaus told jurors. "There is no evidence Carl Dorelien had anything to do with it."