

Woman awarded \$300,000 after trooper pulls her out of car

BOSTON — A Massachusetts state trooper used excessive force against a woman even though he had probable cause to arrest her for traffic violations, a jury has ruled.

Beth Shea, of Milton, was awarded \$300,000 in damages on Tuesday, The Boston Globe reported (<http://bit.ly/1KrAoCA>) Sunday.

Shea, 52, claimed she was terrified of Trooper R. Bradford Porter when he accused her in 2007 of driving recklessly, speeding, resisting arrest, and using her vehicle as a deadly weapon. Records show Porter, who wasn't in uniform, smashed a window of Shea's SUV, unlocked her door, and pulled her into the street while she struggled. She said she didn't believe the enraged man in khakis and a polo shirt was a police officer.

Porter wrote in his arrest report that that his badge and gun were "plainly visible" on his belt.

The Norfolk district attorney's office dropped the charges against Shea four months after her arrest. Photos of abrasions to her body were used as evidence as part of the lawsuit.

Her attorney Richard Goren said in a prepared statement Friday that Shea is grateful for the federal jury's decision.

Her attorneys told the jury that Shea now suffers from chronic post-traumatic stress disorder and lost her job because she could not concentrate. Shea now makes \$13 an hour as an administrative assistant at a veterinary hospital after earning more than \$400,000 a year in securities trading.

"While the jury's award of damages will not make her whole, Beth wants R. Bradford Porter to acknowledge his responsibility for his actions and also for the Massachusetts State Police to re-examine both the June 5, 2007 incident and its subsequent internal investigation," Goren's statement said.

This was the second time a federal jury heard the case. The first jury also found Porter maliciously prosecuted Shea, but that the trooper did not use excessive force. Judge F. Dennis Saylor threw out that verdict and an award of \$60,000 and ordered a new trial.

Porter's attorney, Joseph P. Kittredge, said in an interview Friday the arrest was lawful and that Porter may appeal.

"Ms. Shea drove recklessly at somebody in Milton, almost crashing her car into a woman, which was witnessed by Trooper Porter, and he then did his lawful duty," Kittredge said.

By Associated Press