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Lawyer Acquitted in Hammer Assault Case

By Dave Racher, Daily News Staff Writer

The veteran lawyer has been known to hammer his opponents in court.

By a Northeast Philadelphia man says attorney Patrick J. Duffy hammered him- inside a Red Lion Road tavern, on Super Bowl Sunday 2000.

Lawrence McBride, 38, said Duffy, 50, a lawyer for more than 20 years, falsely accused him of stealing some of his money from the top of the bar, then pulled out a hammer and hit him in the head several times.

McBride's fiancée backed him up, but Duffy denied the assault.

His lawyer, A. Charles Peruto Jr., said that if Duffy had landed several blows on McBride's head with such a weapon McBride would have been killed.

McBride's head required several stitches.

Peruto cited inconsistencies in the prosecution case, and persuaded Municipal Judge Thomas F. Gehret to acquit Duffy of assault.

Gehret said "somewhere there is a shadow of truth in the testimony of the witnesses, but he said he couldn't find Duffy guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

Duffy said he went into the bar, drank a beer and was about to leave with a sex-pack when McBride threatened him for no apparent reason.

"He Walked up and took a poke at me" said Duffy. "I pushed him away and I walked out the door".

"Did you have a hammer?" Peruto asked Duffy.

"No, sir" replied Duffy

"Did anybody have a hammer?" Peruto questioned.

"I have no idea," said Duffy.

Peruto said Duffy insists he doesn't know how McBride wound up bleeding.

"Mr. Duffy certainly didn't walk into the tavern with a hammer and use it on anyone," added Peruto. "My client is a completely innocent man."