

Michael Jackson Guilty of Lesser Charge in Death of Cabbie

By [Kevin Wayne](#)

Chicago, IL - A Cook County jury has found, Michael L. Jackson, 38, a former Chicago Health Department worker and AIDS Fundraiser, guilty of second-degree murder in the 2005 death of a Chicago cabdriver.

Appearing before Cook County Criminal Court Judge James Schreier, Jackson was found guilty of the lesser charge when jurors acquitted him of the more serious charge of first-degree murder and aggravated vehicular hijacking which carried a natural-life sentence.

Jackson will be sentenced for the second-degree murder conviction on September 19 and could receive probation to as many as 20 years in prison.

"He wishes obviously that he had received a better result, but he also knows that as originally charged that it's a significant victory for him," said Tom Breen, Jackson's defense lawyer, adding that he hoped Jackson's "10 to 15 years of philanthropic activities" would be taken into account.

Throughout the trial, both prosecutors and the defense painted different pictures of the deadly disagreement.

Prosecutors said Jackson, a passenger in Paryani's taxi, argued over a fare in the 500 block of West Briar Place, in the East Lakeview neighborhood near Belmont Avenue and Broadway. Jackson protested that the \$8 fare should have been only \$4.

Breen said Paryani was the aggressor and Jackson was defending himself.

"This cabdriver, this businessman, this little shopkeeper was a violent, violent, mean human being. His gestures and his actions put people in a state of fear," Breen said. Then Breen asked the jury, "How would you like to be in a cab in the dark, in the cold, and have the doors locked?"

Jackson testified on Thursday telling jurors, "I said I'm not going to tolerate this. I work for the City of Chicago. I'm a director. When I get to work tomorrow I'm going to call the commissioner and tell him about your conduct." He, meaning Paryani, allegedly said, "I'm going to kill you. You aren't going to tell anyone about this."

Prosecutors said Paryani fell to the ground and Jackson ran over Paryani and then stopped the car. Prosecutors add that when a witness came to the scene, Jackson reversed and ran over Paryani a second time and then a third time with the 2000 Crown Victoria cab.

Paryani, a Pakistani immigrant who had been in the U.S. since 1971, is survived by a wife and four children.

Jackson had worked for the Department of Public Health and had been a fundraiser for HIV and AIDS treatment. He helped create the Hearts Foundation, a fundraising arm for HIV/AIDS service organizations.

