

Ex-doc faces accuser at a third trial

BY CHRISENA COLEMAN
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

A MANHATTAN doctor cleared of criminal charges that he sodomized a sedated patient will face his accuser once again tomorrow in Bronx Supreme Court at the opening of a \$10 million malpractice trial.

Patrick Griffin, 50, a former gastroenterologist and former medical director at St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital, was convicted at his first trial, in 1996, and sentenced to 10 years in prison.

The verdict was thrown out on appeal and a new trial ordered.

In April 2000, Griffin was found not guilty of performing oral sex on a Bronx woman during an in-office colonoscopy.

Despite the acquittal, Griffin's accuser is going forward with her civil suit. Griffin's attorney Paul Callan said his client is innocent of the charges and looks forward to his day in court.

"These charges are despicable and nothing but an attempt to make money," said Callan.

"We will prove our case in court. These are false charges against him," Callan said. "My client looks forward to being fully, finally and completely vindicated."

Callan said the legal troubles have been a nightmare for Griffin, destroying the doctor's life.

The attorney for the female plaintiff did not respond for comment.

During the second trial, jurors learned from the prosecution's medical expert that the sedation drugs Griffin used had been known to cause sexual fantasies in patients.

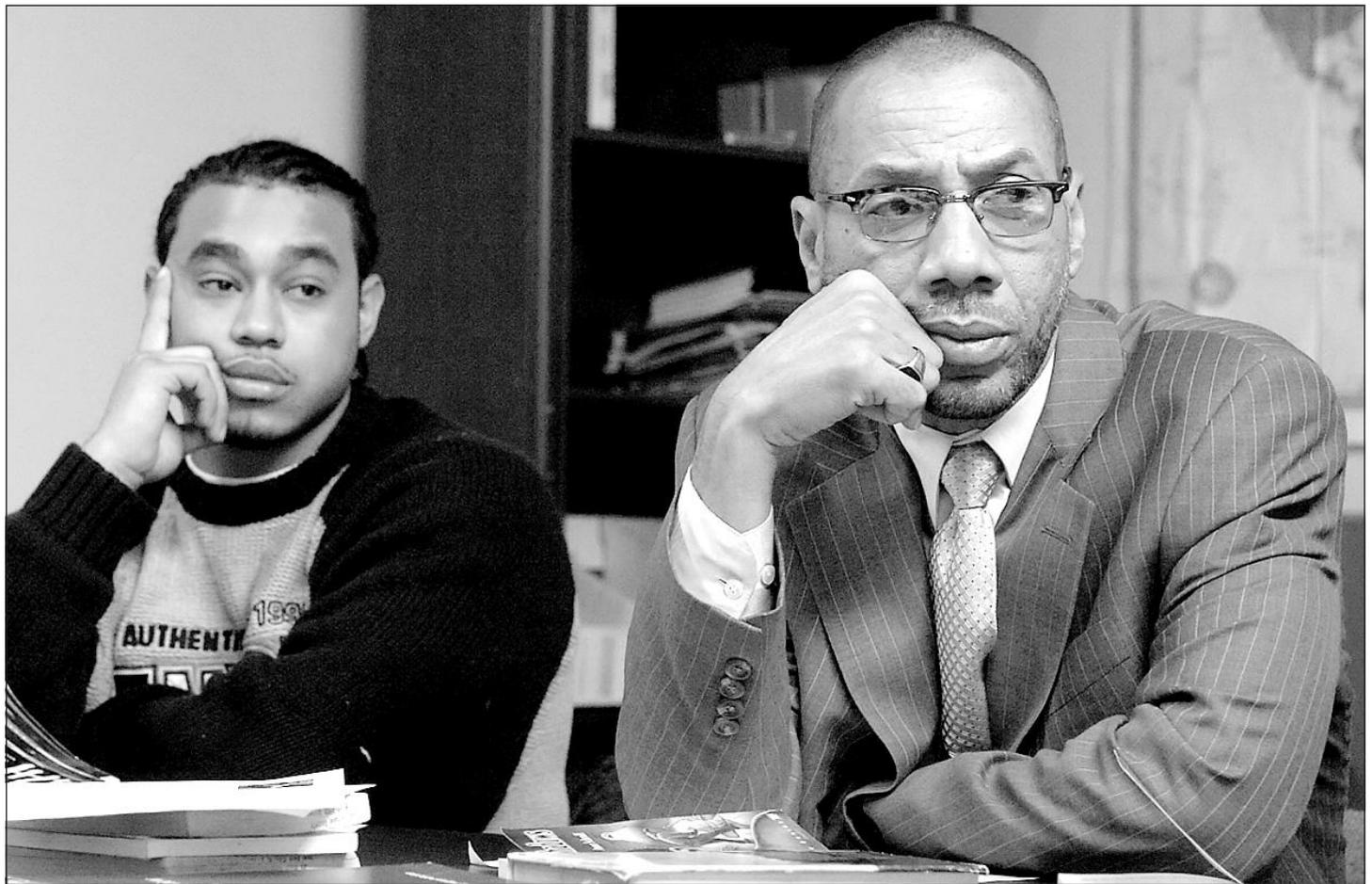
The defense pointed out that the victim had been under psychiatric care for depression at the time of the alleged attack.

The jury deliberated about eight hours before clearing Griffin.

A Harvard-trained doctor, Griffin lost his license as the result of the charges. His wife divorced him, and he went from practicing medicine to bartending.

"His life will never be the same as the result of a plaintiff who is just out to make money," Callan charged. "It's a horrific situation."

ccoleman@nydailynews.com



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Deputy Mayor Dennis Walcott (right) sits with student during a GED class at the Fortune Society.

Good Fortune Society

Classes for former prisoners receive \$465,000 in funding

BY CARRIE MELAGO
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

A NONPROFIT that gives former offenders another shot at education received a second chance of its own recently.

The Fortune Society, a 40-year-old organization that helps prisoners reenter the community, nearly lost its literacy and GED classes when its state education funding fell through.

But the city announced last week that it would provide \$465,000 for the programs through the Department of Youth and Community Development's budget, allowing 185 participants to continue learning.

"Without this funding, we wouldn't have an education

program," said Stanley Richard, chief operating officer of the Fortune Society. "And the foundation for all of this is education."

The walls of the Fortune Society's W. 23rd St. complex are plastered with essays about novelist and poet Langston Hughes and student vignettes about the subway, work completed during various reading, math and English as a second language courses.

In English instructor Eric Appleton's course, students ages 17 to 50 silently read books ranging from "Jonathan Livingston Seagull" to a high school drama called "Brothers in Arms," then reflect on them in journals.

When Kuron Halsey began



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Lisette Pena at the Fortune Society, which offers a second chance for education.

reading the prison memoir "A Bright Spot in the Yard" for the class, he expected the book to scare him out of getting arrested again.

Instead, the 18-year-old

found himself gripped by a quote from an inmate serving more than 20 years: "You don't know what hurting is until you try acting as if it doesn't hurt."

Halsey, who attends reading classes at the Fortune Society as an alternative to incarceration, filled a notebook page with his response to the passage, which made him realize he had been suppressing his emotions about a woman.

"Before, I would have read it and said, 'That's deep,' and moved right past it," said Halsey, who has previous arrests for robbery and assault.

Deputy Mayor Dennis Walcott said during a tour of the facility that programs to help ex-offenders reenter society are a priority of the administration's newly created Office of Adult Education.

"We feel this is a wise investment that will pay dividends into the future," Walcott said.

cmelago@nydailynews.com