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GREATER WATERBURY

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Naugatuck man awarded \$4.1 million by jury in suit over I-95 crash

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WATERBURY — A Naugatuck man has won more than \$3 million in damages in a personal injury case stemming from a 1996 tangle with a tractor-trailer on Interstate 95 in Bridgeport.

John Cummings, 38, who suffered shoulder and spinal injuries, also will collect an additional \$1 million from a trucking company at fault in

the accident, bringing his windfall to about \$4.1 million.

The trucking firm's portion was calculated by assessing 12 percent annual interest on the jury award each of the three years since Cummings filed the suit in 1998.

Jurors returned the verdict after two hours Thursday, shocking several local lawyers with the size of the award.

Cummings' lawyer, Mike D'Amico, defended the multi-million dollar award Friday, saying Cummings' injuries have affected his ability to work and will continue to do so in years to come.

"This was a very dramatic accident involving a tractor-trailer," D'Amico said Friday. "He had several injuries from the accident. ... They are serious injuries — he's not paralyzed, but it cer-

tainly affects his livelihood and dramatically affects his life."

It was unclear Friday whether defense attorney Lloyd Pedersen plans to appeal. Pedersen, who could not be reached Friday, argued during the trial that Cummings' injuries were not as serious as Cummings said they were and did not result from the crash, which occurred about 8 p.m. June 26, 1996.