



Bartender gets payout 15 months after taking knife for patron

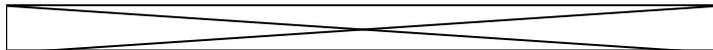
Wednesday - 9/4/2013, 8:35am ET



By Michelle Basch



Bartender Mike Boone stands near Eastern Market in August, 15 months after being stabbed eight times. (WTOP/Michelle Basch)



WASHINGTON - A local bartender who was hailed as a hero for protecting a customer from a criminal is now getting big financial help.

It's still hard for Mike Boone to talk about the day in May 2012 when, for safety's sake, he walked a woman patron home from Trusty's Bar in D.C.'s Hill East neighborhood at closing time.

"I know I did the right thing, but it comes with a consequence," Boone told WTOP, his voice full of emotion.

During the walk, a man confronted the two and snatched the woman's purse. Boone grabbed it back, but the would-be thief fought with him and stabbed him eight times.

The wounds were more than just physical. Boone is being treated for post-traumatic stress disorder related to the attack.

"Strange as it sounds, I'd rather be stabbed eight times again than have to deal with the mental part because it's way worse, believe it or not. Of course I don't want that again, but the mental part that comes along with such an event is astronomical. It's just an enormous, terrifying experience," he said.

This past January, while sitting on his enclosed front porch in Southeast D.C., Boone became a crime victim again.

"Four kids, teenage boys, came onto my porch with a pistol and mugged me," he said. "They yelled a little bit, cussed at me and said, 'Give us everything you have,' and I gave them my phone and my wallet."

Boone says the incident was a big setback in his recovery. He says he constantly relives last year's stabbing in his mind.

"I have problems with large crowds, and I have problems just with singular conversations with people. I don't communicate the same as I used to," he said.

The man who stabbed him is now behind bars, but Boone has no health insurance and couldn't pay his bills. He applied to D.C. Superior Court's Crime Victims Compensation Program for help.

The fund pays eligible victims of violent crime in the city a maximum of \$25,000 per claim.

"Property crimes generally are not covered under this, but crimes like homicide, assault, robbery, domestic violence, sexual assault -- those things are," said the program's director, Laura Banks Reed.

Boone's hospital bill was originally more than \$40,000, but the program negotiated with the hospital and recently paid the entire bill off.

Boone is also getting money for lost wages and to continue his treatment.

During fiscal year 2012, more than 3,400 claims were filed through D.C.'s Crime Victims Compensation Program, and more than \$8.7 million was paid out.

"The money comes from court costs and filing fees here at Superior Court, and we also get a grant from the Department of Justice every year," said Banks Reed.

"Fifty-three percent of the claims that we receive are for victims of domestic violence, and it's very likely due to the fact that at Superior Court we have a very comprehensive set of services for domestic violence victims," she added.

It usually takes three months tops for a crime victim to start receiving money after filing a claim, but in complicated cases, it may take longer. In Boone's case, it took more than a year.

Banks Reed said her job is very rewarding.

"Violent crime is a life-changing event. People will have memories of what their life was like before the crime, and how different it becomes after the crime," she said. "The Crime Victims Compensation Program can't erase what has happened, but we can provide some assistance to victims to address some of the financial concerns that crime brings on."

Boone, who recently started a new bartending job, called the outcome in his case amazing.

"Everything is really good. I haven't been really celebrating yet, but I'm celebrating in my heart and in my mind that these enormous bills are now gone," he said.

Although his hospital bill is taken care of, Boone still has other bills to pay and continues to accept donations through PayPal to his email account, which is mike.boone@yahoo.com.

Boone is also an artist who sells his paintings. You can see some of his work on his Facebook page.

Learn more about D.C.'s Crime Victims Compensation Program on its website.

Follow @WTOP on Twitter.

© 2013 WTOP. All Rights Reserved.