

New York Daily News - <http://www.nydailynews.com>**He wins \$7.25M in botched eye surgery suit**

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A former Wall Street broker won a \$7.25 million civil suit after a botched laser eye surgery that he says left his vision permanently damaged.

The award, handed down by a jury in Manhattan Supreme Court, is believed to be the biggest so far in cases involving LASIK surgery.

Mark Schiffer, a 32-year-old Yale graduate, said the shoddy care he got from Dr. Mark Speaker and the TLC Laser Eye Center in October 2000 forced him to ditch his Wall Street career and take a job with his dad's security firm, according to his lawyer, Todd Krouner.

TLC is one of the nation's biggest LASIK centers.

Krouner painted TLC as the "McDonald's of LASIK surgery," where patients get only nominal treatment while the doctors rush from patient to patient.

He said Speaker operated on 11 people the day he did Schiffer's surgery. In the haste, Krouner said, Speaker and TLC missed the fact that Schiffer had a condition in his corneas that made him a bad candidate for the surgery.

Schiffer had been "embarking on the beginnings of an extraordinary career in investment banking," Krouner told the Daily News.

But instead, he suffered at the hands of doctors "never seeing the warning signs in the preoperative assessment."

In his closing arguments, Krouner described Speaker as "the Darth Vader of laser surgery."

The jury apparently agreed, giving Schiffer \$4.5 million for lost wages and \$2.75 million for pain and suffering. Wednesday's verdict was only against Speaker, not TLC, Krouner said.

That total is almost double the last-known biggest jury award in a LASIK case. In that one, in Arizona, a commercial airline pilot sued over surgery that he said destroyed his night vision, making him useless at his job.