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Detroit sues for \$10M spent on former federal monitor

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The City of Detroit today filed a lawsuit seeking to recover more than \$10 million it spent on a federal monitor who allegedly had an inappropriate relationship with former Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick.

The lawsuit, filed today in Wayne County Circuit Court, claims that Sheryl Robinson Wood and her employers charged the city for millions of dollars in work that wasn't worth it. Specifically, the suit claimed, Wood was supposed to be an independent, unbiased and professional monitor – not someone who had a relationship with the city's top official.

Shortly after the ink dried on the order appointing her as "primary independent monitor," Wood began an inappropriate, unethical and undisclosed personal relationship with Kwame Kilpatrick," the lawsuit said. "This relationship began before Wood submitted her first invoice for payment to the federal court and forever tainted her ability to be independent and unbiased as she and Kroll had promised."

"Once she decided to have sex with the mayor of the city, you cannot possibly be unbiased, you cannot possibly be impartial," said attorney Thomas Murray, who is representing the city. "That's an absolute breach of her fiduciary duty that she owed to the city."

The lawsuit also named Kroll Associates, Saul Ewing and Venable – all of whom Wood worked for since getting hired to oversee the city's long-troubled police department.

Wood was removed from the post in 2009 after Kilpatrick's text messages revealed they had an inappropriate relationship.

Murray said that Kilpatrick's recent deposition in a civil lawsuit in Mississippi – in which he claims that his texts were unlawfully released – also bolster the city's lawsuit against Wood. Specifically, he noted, Kilpatrick admitted in the deposition that he had a one-night stand with Wood.

"We've confirmed through the deposition testimony in the Mississippi lawsuit that he did at least have a one-night stand with her," Murray said.

Murray said that Wood also wasn't worth the money, noting that while she was monitor, the city was in 30% compliance. Under the new monitor, the city is in 60% compliance.

"She was biased, not good and fraudulent." Attorneys for the defendants were not available for comment.