

# Text messages spell trouble for mayor

Detroit's Kilpatrick probed; denied he had tryst with aide

The Associated Press



Text messages of Mayor **Kwame Kilpatrick** are under scrutiny.

DETROIT — Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick is under investigation and in apparent seclusion with his family amid allegations of perjury and past sexual trysts with his chief of staff.

Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy said yesterday that her office would investigate reports that Kilpatrick and Chief of Staff Christine Beatty exchanged romantic text messages in 2002 and 2003, despite testifying in a trial last summer that they did not have a physical relationship then.

The messages raise the question of whether the mayor and Beatty committed perjury during the whistle-blower trial.

The Detroit Free Press examined about 14,000 text messages on Beatty's city-issued pager from those years that indicate the two had been intimate during that period.

They reveal the two carried on a flirty, sometimes sexually explicit dialogue about where to meet and how to conceal their trysts. The mayor is married and has three children. Beatty was also married at the time.

The Free Press did not explain exactly how it obtained the messages. Worthy said she was unaware of the text messages until she read the newspaper's report.

A conviction of lying under oath can bring up to 15 years' imprisonment. Under Detroit's City Charter, Kilpatrick would be removed from office as mayor if he is convicted of a felony, City Council President Ken Cockrel Jr. said.

Neither Kilpatrick nor Beatty planned to release any statements yesterday regarding the investigation, mayoral spokesman James Canning said.

A message seeking comment also was left on Beatty's home phone.

The trial in question arose from a lawsuit filed by two police officers who alleged they were fired for investigating claims that the mayor used his security unit to cover up extramarital affairs.

The lawsuit ended with the jury awarding \$6.5 million to the two officers. The payout eventually grew to more than \$8.5 million.

For Kilpatrick, continuing to function as mayor likely is out of the question, University of Detroit-Mercy marketing professor Mike Bernacchi said.

"The best thing Mayor Kilpatrick can do, and I think he can do it honestly, is resign and say it's in the best interest of the city," Bernacchi said.