

WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN TO PUBLIC OFFICIALS WHO LIE

Detroit's long urban nightmare is ~~over~~ moving onto new scandals now. Kwame Kilpatrick finally admitted to perjuring himself yesterday, and stepped down so Detroit can let some other place—perhaps Alaska—be the laughingstock for the next two months.

In a standing-room-only Detroit courtroom, Kilpatrick pleaded guilty to felony charges in his perjury case and no contest in his assault case, ending his steadfast refusal to resign amid a scandal that only grew in intensity over the past eight months.

"I lied under oath," Kilpatrick told Wayne County Circuit Judge David Groner, almost echoing the Free Press headline in January that sparked the mayor's text message scandal.

Under the terms of his deal, Kilpatrick will spend four months in jail, forfeit his law license and his pension from the state Legislature, pay up to \$1 million in restitution and serve 5 years of probation. He will leave office Sept. 18 and has promised not to run for office while on probation.

Even the plea deal made a lot of sense: it requires jail time, it tries to recoup some of the \$9 million this cost the city of Detroit, and it ensures that Detroit will be Kwame-free for the five years he serves probation. It would all have been fairly satisfying, if only Kwame hadn't pre-empted about 20 minutes of the Giants-'Skins game yesterday to say a long goodbye (grumble grumble).

This is what **should** happen to public officials

who lie about important matters. Not like some other liars we know. Scooter Libby, whom George Bush saved from having to spend a day in jail (and who never admitted his guilt). Alberto Gonzales, who thus far hasn't paid a price for lying about the warrantless wiretap program and the US Attorney purge. Karl Rove, for his lies about outing Plame and firing Governor Siegelman. Who knows? Governor Palin may soon be on this list for her attempts to cover up the firing of Walt Monegan.

But, as the old rule works, Republicans don't ever actually have to pay for their abuse of public trust.