

MAN TELLS OF BEATING BY POLICE / ANNOUNCES SUIT VS. SUFFOLK COUNTY, COPS

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Quotes:

The Suffolk County Police Department's internal affairs division is looking into a 21-year-old Wyandanch man's claims that he was severely beaten by a police officer who pummeled his body with a heavy flashlight last Friday.

The alleged victim, Jason L. White, held a news conference at his attorneys' Hauppauge office yesterday to announce he has filed a suit against the county and police department seeking \$10 million in damages.

"On the way to see my daughter, I suffered a beating from the Suffolk County Police Department," White, who is black, said yesterday, standing on South 18th Street in Wyandanch at the spot where he said white police officers detained him in a cruiser for 45 minutes.

White said he had been stopped by officers in an unmarked car about 8:30 p.m. while riding his bicycle to his 6-month-old daughter's home 10 blocks away. White said he was detained, beaten, and his record checked for outstanding warrants. He said he was released when he agreed under a threat of retaliation not to tell anyone.

"Not only were my rights violated but me as a person, my existence was violated," said White.

The two officers who stopped White told investigators they thought he was engaged in a drug deal and that he ran when they confronted him, said Insp. Philip Robilotto, commander of internal affairs. They said they chased White over a fence and caught him and put him into a police car to conduct a search for drugs, Robilotto said. They found nothing, Robilotto said.

The allegation comes as the issue of police brutality and so-called racial profiling by law enforcement officials is being discussed by U.S. federal officials.

White's attorneys, former Suffolk County prosecutors Michael J. Brown and Robert A. Macedonio, displayed pictures of wounds White said he received in the alleged attack and two recent newspaper articles focusing on police brutality and so-called racial profiling.

"They are white officers. He is a black male. Race is an issue," Macedonio said.

White, who gave the following account, said he was on his way to see his daughter when a cruiser pulled up behind him near Jamaica Avenue and South 19th Street. He said the car then passed him and blocked his path and an officer jumped out and started to strike him with a black heavy-duty flashlight. "He said, 'You know what you've done,'" White said.

He said he was then handcuffed from behind and taken to a marked cruiser, which was on South 18th Street. White said officers ran a check to see if there were any outstanding warrants and that he heard a dispatcher say "negative."

The officer who had allegedly beat him approached White at that point and instructed him to "forget about" the incident.

White produced documents showing he visited emergency rooms at Nassau County Medical Center and Brunswick Hospital Center in Amityville later that evening. He was prescribed medication for the pain and released that same evening.

"This is not right," White said. "Why not get these officers off the street? Because just like they did it to me they'll do it to someone else."