

Cop Says Brass Leaned On Him to Hide Quotas

By MARK TOOR

A Police Officer who surreptitiously taped his superiors illegally threatening officers who did not fulfill ticket quotas and urging them to make arrests without probable cause sued the NYPD last week, charging that his bosses tried to pressure him not to make complaints and when that failed, burst into his home, stripped him, handcuffed him and hauled him to the Jamaica Hospital psychiatric ward.

'Didn't Have to Be Like This'

At one point, with Police Officer Adrian Schoolcraft restrained on the floor, Deputy Chief Michael Marino, second in command of the Brooklyn North Patrol Borough, put his boot on Mr. Schoolcraft's face and stated, "It didn't have to be like this," according to the suit, which was filed Aug. 10 in U.S. District Court in Manhattan. The suit names as defendants the NYPD and 11 specific Sergeants, Lieutenants, Captains, Deputy Inspectors

and Chiefs, as well as Jamaica Hospital and two of its doctors. It seeks \$50 million plus attorneys' fees.

"We've been finding that the NYPD's MO in these situations with this type of officer is they definitely try to make them look crazy," Joshua Fitch, one of Mr. Schoolcraft's attorneys, said in an interview.

The lawsuit, and an accompanying series of stories in the Village Voice that focused on Mr. Schoolcraft's tapes, gave additional ammunition to politicians, community leaders and others who question whether the Police Department is accurately reporting crime. Mr. Schoolcraft's tapes also show officers refusing to take complaints from crime victims and supervisors downgrading crimes so they didn't show up on Compstat reports, according to the Voice series.

Other police officers consider Mr. Schoolcraft a whistleblower, a lazy or incompetent cop with a chip on his

(Continued on Page 7)

Cop's Suit Challenges Brass on Quotas

(Continued from Page 1)

shoulder, or simply a nut. The NYPD has refused to comment on the case.

Mr. Fitch said his firm has created a website, www.schoolcraftlawsuit.com, at which officers can report their own tales of corruption, anonymously if they prefer. "Have you been punished for not meeting a quota or attempting to disclose NYPD corruption?" it asks. "Have you been instructed to issue summonses or make arrests for offenses you did not observe?"

The suit contends Mr. Schoolcraft, 35, was "forced... to sever his employment with the NYPD" and move upstate, 350 miles from the city. Even so, according to the suit, "armed NYPD officials continue, up and through the present, to come to his home, repeatedly pound on his door, photograph him, and engage in efforts designed to purposefully intimidate and harass [him] in a tireless effort to silence him once and for all."

'Myopic Obsession with Quotas'

Mr. Schoolcraft joined the Police Department in July 2002. He was assigned to the 81st Precinct in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, when he taped the precinct commander, Deputy Inspector Stephen Mauriello, telling officers on Oct. 28, 2008, that they need to write more summonses. "If you don't work... I'm moving you. You're going to another platoon," he said. State law and labor-arbitration decisions forbid police commanders from transferring or otherwise punishing officers because they don't fulfill summons quotas.

"Defendants were so obsessed with making their 'numbers' that they literally instructed officers to make arrests when there was no evidence of any criminal activity whatsoever," the suit says. "... Defendants' myopic obsession with quotas came straight from the highest-ranking officials in the New York City Police Department."

Three days after the summons threat, Mr. Schoolcraft taped Mr. Mauriello ordering "his officers to arrest virtually everybody they came in contact with at 120 Chauncey St." (a mere three blocks from the fictitious address for Ralph and Alice Kramden in "The Honeymooners"): "Everybody goes. I don't care. You're on 120 Chauncey and they're popping champagne? Yoke 'em. Put them through the system. They got bandanas on? Arrest them. Everybody goes tonight. They're underage? F--- it."

In January 2009, Mr. Schoolcraft "began to be scrutinized and increas-

ingly pressured by his supervisors and commanding officers to increase his 'activity' (i.e., not writing enough summonses and making arrests) or face possible low performance evaluations and tour/command reassignment," the suit says.

'Hostile Work Environment'

At the end of the month, he received a poor evaluation. Mr. Schoolcraft said he would appeal it. His bosses, including Mr. Mauriello, "repeatedly attempted to discourage [him] from appealing his performance evaluation and implicitly threatened plaintiff with retaliation if he pursued the issue."

When Mr. Schoolcraft declined to drop his appeal, his supervisors "began to create an increasingly hostile work environment for him." Lieut. Timothy Caughey reprimanded him for not writing in his memo book that he had gone to the bathroom, the suit said. When he asked the duty Captain, Theodore Lauterborn, to "document this act of retaliation," Mr. Lauterborn responded: "Didn't we tell you when you left here that there's gonna be a lot more supervision? You think this is... retaliation? This is a matter of supervision..."

"During this conversation defendant Lauterborn informed [Mr. Schoolcraft] that he was being carefully monitored because of his 'poor performance' and suggested that it should not be a surprise now if even minor infractions result in disciplinary action, even if they had not previously resulted in such action," the suit says.

Mr. Lauterborn then gave Mr. Schoolcraft some tips for increasing his activity. He "instructed plaintiff merely to approach and detain young adults for sitting in front of a high-crime building, regardless of probable cause or reasonable suspicion," the suit said. "Further, defendant Lauterborn then suggested that were he to hear one of those individuals curse during this interaction, it would be appropriate to arrest them despite having committed 'no violation of law,' because police cannot appear 'soft' in these neighborhoods."

'Menacing Behavior'

Mr. Schoolcraft contacted the Internal Affairs Bureau, but, the suit says, "IAB Detectives repeatedly left messages for plaintiff at the 81st Precinct, despite the explicit duty of IAB to keep such complaints confidential, effectively and implicitly alerting plaintiff's superiors that he was now actively working with IAB..."

On Oct. 31, 2009, Mr. Caughey examined Mr. Schoolcraft's memo book, then "began to exhibit menacing behavior" to Mr. Schoolcraft, the suit says: "With one hand near his gun, [he] made continuous menacing gestures directed at [Mr. Schoolcraft] in an apparent response to the evidence of corruption contained within [Mr. Schoolcraft's] memo book..."

Mr. Schoolcraft decided to go home to Glendale, Queens, "rather than subject himself to potential physical harm" from Mr. Caughey, the suit says. He left less than an hour before the end of his shift with a Sergeant's permission, but the Sergeant later ordered him back to the precinct with a voice-mail message.

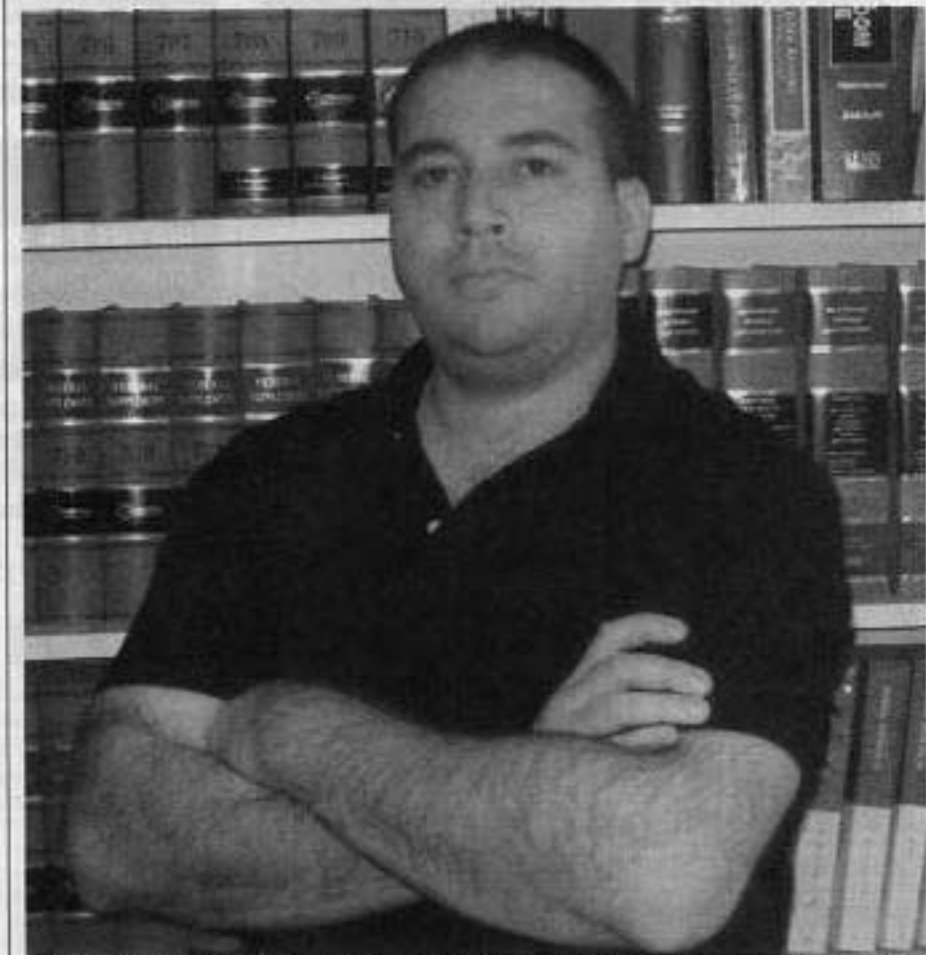
That night, at least a dozen police officers, two of them in riot gear, "unlawfully entered his home without a warrant, permission, or other legally permissible reason to do so," the suit says. It says Mr. Marino had obtained keys to Mr. Schoolcraft's apartment after officers told the landlord Mr. Schoolcraft was suicidal.

'Just Take Him'

The officers ordered him to get dressed and return to the precinct, then told him he was suspended, the suit says. He declined to go, and Mr. Marino "impatiently stated in sum and substance: 'All right, just take him, I can't f----- stand him anymore'... [S]everal police officers pulled plaintiff out of his bed, physically assaulted him, tore his clothes as they threw him to the floor, illegally strip-searched him and violently handcuffed him with his arms behind his back, causing excruciating pain to his wrists, shoulders, arms, neck and back," according to the suit.

They searched the apartment, taking his notes and reports on his complaints about the 81st Precinct, the suit says. Then they took him to the Jamaica Hospital psychiatric ward, where they gave doctors false information that led to his involuntary admission as an emotionally disturbed person, according to the suit. He was not released for six days, even though "one of the doctors who initially examined [him] stated out loud that it was 'ridiculous' that he was even brought to the psychiatric emergency room..."

Police officers denied Mr. Schoolcraft access to a telephone, the suit says, and hospital staff members ignored his requests to contact IAB or photograph his bruises. Mr. Schoolcraft "was completely cut off from the outside world, and there was nothing he could do about it," the suit says.



POLICE STATE: Police Officer Adrian Schoolcraft has accused his supervisors of pressuring him to suppress his complaints about crime-reporting irregularities and, when he refused, of storming his home and having him committed to a psychiatric ward on trumped-up claims. He is seeking \$50 million in damages and has named as defendants 11 individual supervisors as well as the NYPD.