

Nassau cop not guilty

- Jury clears officer in confrontation with other cops
- Verdict after her lawyer alleges 'racial animus'

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A Nassau County police officer was acquitted yesterday of harassment and resisting-arrest charges stemming from an off-duty encounter with fellow officers in West Hempstead.

A jury found Dolores Sharpe, 53, not guilty of the charges in the Nov. 29, 2013, altercation with Nassau County officers Charles Volpe and Victor Gladitz.

If convicted, Sharpe faced up to 15 days in jail on the harassment charge, a violation. She faced up to a year in jail on the resisting-arrest charge, a misdemeanor.

After the jury delivered its verdict in First District Court in Hempstead, supporters clapped and cheered, and Sharpe shed tears, hugged her attorney and pumped her fist.

"A weight has been lifted off of my shoulders," Sharpe said outside the courtroom. "I'm ready to move on with my life. Thank you, Jesus. . . . It's been extremely difficult. . . . But I'm so glad that it's over."

Sharpe's attorney, Frederick Brewington, said Sharpe was falsely accused. Asked if he planned to sue the police department, Brewington said he would not "discuss any repercussions of these false allegations."

Brewington, who said at trial that his client was the victim of "racial animus," said yesterday that the "treatment that Officer Sharpe received is not unlike what African-American women oftentimes receive by people in authority who think they can get away with it."

Sharpe is African-American. Volpe and Gladitz are white.

Volpe testified during the trial that he saw Sharpe while investigating a traffic accident in the parking lot of a dollar store. They exchanged words after Sharpe accused Volpe of blocking her from parking with his police car. Sharpe said she was a police officer but refused to give him her ID, he said.

Assistant District Attorney Theresa Tebbett said in her closing arguments last week that Sharpe acted "above the law" when she initially refused to show identification during the



Nassau Police Officer Dolores Sharpe, right, is congratulated yesterday by her former partner, retired Officer Soraya Benitez-Mercado. ■ Video: newsday.com/hempstead

run-in and yelled and cursed at the officers.

Sharpe, a 20-year veteran who works in the Application Investigation Unit, previously worked in Community Affairs. She served a 30-day unpaid suspension. Brewington said Sharpe showed her ID and badge during the altercation and only cursed after Volpe cursed at her.

Paul Leonard, a spokesman for Nassau acting District Attorney Madeline Singas, in a statement, called the proceedings a "fair trial."

"We respect the jury process and their verdict," he said.

Insp. Kenneth Lack, a police

department spokesman, declined to comment, saying the incident is under review by the department's Internal Affairs Bureau. IAB investigators were in the courtroom when the verdict was delivered.

James Carver, president of the Nassau Police Benevolent Association, also declined to comment. He said Volpe and Gladitz had no comment.

The jury deliberated over four days — including listening to read-backs of Volpe's testimony — and was deadlocked 5-1 in favor of acquittal until

about 20 minutes before reaching a verdict.

The jury of five women and one man asked Judge Susan Kluever to read the definitions of the charges and reasonable doubt at 10:54 a.m. At 11:17 a.m. they went back to deliberating. At 11:37 a.m., they wrote a note to the judge saying they had reached a verdict. Jurors declined to comment afterward.

Outside the courtroom, Sharpe, who was hugged by supporters, including her former partner, said she had "nothing to say" to Volpe and Gladitz.