
LONG ISLAND

Garden City, cops to pay \$150G judgment

BY STEFANIE DAZIO

stefanie.dazio@newsday.com

The Village of Garden City and its police department will pay \$150,000 to a retired Nassau County correction officer who alleged that officers violated his civil rights in 2016 when they racially profiled him, and mistook him for a shoplifter, according to court documents.

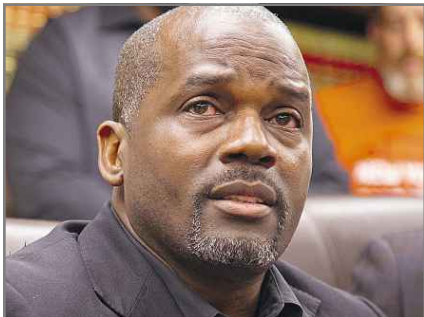
The defendants — the village, police department, a police detective lieutenant, sergeant and two officers — did not admit liability, wrongdoing or damages, court documents show. A lawsuit — which claimed Ronald Lanier was assaulted both verbally and physically by police and sought at least \$40 million in damages — was filed in 2017 in the U.S. District Court Eastern District. The judgment was signed Monday.

The defendants will also have to pay for Lanier's attorney fees, which his lawyer, Frederick Brewington, declined to disclose. The two sides must still determine the exact amount.

"This is an enormous win. This is a very positive outcome not only with regard in a monetary outcome but a moral outcome," Brewington said late Monday afternoon.

Andrew Preston, an attorney for the defendants, declined to comment because the litigation is pending.

Lanier had accused two white Garden City police officers, George Byrd and John Russell, of racially profiling him at the Western Beef grocery store in Mineola. They were seeking an African American man who had allegedly shoplifted a purse from a village store and ran into



HOWARD SCHNAPP

Retired correction officer Ronald Lanier

the supermarket.

The officers allegedly came up behind Lanier, who is black, as he was shopping, ordered him to put his hands behind his back and threw him to the ground, Lanier has claimed. He has said they whispered in his ear, "You want to be a tough guy?" and then beat him on both sides of his ribs.

Lanier has said that he complied with their orders and said, "I am on the job" — a phrase that law enforcement officers use to identify themselves to each other — and questioned why he was being detained, saying he had done nothing wrong.

Lanier was walked through the supermarket in handcuffs and put in the back of a police car. He was later released but not charged, and claimed he drove himself to the hospital for treatment of bruises. The shoplifting suspect was later apprehended in the supermarket.

The Nassau County district attorney's office investigated and declined to file charges against Byrd and Russell.