

Garden City police to pay \$150K to Mineola man in civil rights suit

By **Rebecca Klar** - May 15, 2018

Frederick K. Brewington, right, speaks at a December 2016 news conference with his client, Ronald Lanier, left, head down, who accepted \$150,000 from Garden City police after he says two village cops racially profiled and beat him. (Photo by Noah Manskar)

The Village of Garden City will pay \$150,000 to a Mineola man who sued the village, its Police Department and four officers, saying that officers beat and wrongfully arrested him based on his race outside a Mineola supermarket in November 2016.

The man, Ronald Lanier, accepted the \$150,000 settlement offer according to court documents filed last Tuesday.

The judgment was signed on Monday.

Lanier's [suit, filed in 2017](#), sought \$50 million.

The defendants, including the village, its Police Department, Officer George Byrd, Officer John Russell, Detective Lt. Gerard Kneisel and Sgt. Thomas Mauren, will also have to pay Lanier's legal fees.

Lanier was represented by civil rights attorney Frederick K. Brewington.

Brewington was not immediately available for comment on Tuesday, but he told Newsday that "this is an enormous win."

"This is a very positive outcome not only with regard in a monetary outcome but a moral outcome," Brewington told Newsday.

Brewington did not disclose his legal fees, according to Newsday.

Requests to reach the defendants' attorney, Andrew Preston, were unavailing.

In his lawsuit, Lanier accused the Village of Garden City, the Police Department, Byrd and Russell of violating his civil and constitutional rights.

Lanier, a retired Nassau County corrections officer, said he was wrongfully arrested, beaten and berated by officers who mistook him for a shoplifter the night of the November incident in Western Beef Supermarket in Mineola.

Officers arrested Lanier, mistaking him for a Queens man who had stolen designer handbags from a department store, and released him after hearing that the actual suspect had been arrested, according to court filings.

Lanier's suit accuses the officers and department of racism – claiming he was targeted as a suspect because he is black.

The incident drew protests from community activists and black law enforcement groups.

The Nassau County district attorney's office investigated the matter and found no grounds for criminal charges.

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