

LONG ISLAND

WOMAN'S SUIT ALLEGES NASSAU POLICE BRUTALITY

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Nassau detectives beat up a Levittown woman, searched her home without a warrant and falsely arrested her last year, according to a federal lawsuit filed last week seeking at least \$5 million in damages and legal fees.

Donna Ciple, 63, said detectives harassed her family because her son, who had been hospitalized after overdosing on drugs in the summer of 2018, refused to become a police informant.

The complaint filed in the Eastern District of New York alleges the police officers dragged Ciple from her home on a cold day in March 2019 wearing nothing but a pajama bottom and a tank top.

"This lawsuit is about excessive force and unreasonable abuse of authority," Ciple's attorney, Frederick Brewington of Hempstead, said. "This lawsuit brings home the reality that absolute power corrupts absolutely. Ms. Ciple, no matter what the cops said, shouldn't have been subjected to treatment like this."

Ciple names Nassau County, the police department, the district attorney's office and several detectives as defendants in the lawsuit. Nassau police did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The district attorney's office referred inquiries about the case to Nassau spokeswoman Christine Geed,

who declined to comment, saying the county doesn't comment on current or anticipated litigation.

John Wighaus, president of the Nassau County Detectives Association, said he was not aware of the lawsuit and declined to comment further.

In a March 13, 2019, news release, Nassau police said detectives went to Ciple's home because she was wanted for criminal contempt. Ciple became verbally abusive, police said, and struck a detective with a door. She allegedly flailed her arms and legs when the detectives tried to take her into custody and bent one detective's thumb, causing pain and suffering.

Ciple, who was charged with second-degree assault and resisting arrest, said in the lawsuit that the detectives made up that story. The complaint said she had video that proves police visited Ciple's home day and night, shining lights in the windows and ringing the doorbell, as part of the intimidation campaign.

The lawsuit claimed a detective intentionally put his hand in the path of the door as Ciple tried to close it during a March 12, 2019, visit to the home. When the door hit the police officer's hand, he yelled, "That's it. It's a go, it's a go. She attacked me."

The criminal charges filed against Ciple were dismissed in October, according to the lawsuit.