

Lawsuit Accuses Antioch Police of Civil Rights Violations During Reporter's Arrest

The reporter's beating and Tasing is part of 'a systemic cancer' within the department, says civil rights attorney Adanté Pointer

ANTIOCH, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES, April 27, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A federal civil rights lawsuit was filed Thursday by a radio reporter and activist who was tackled and Tased while compliant and pinned down by Antioch Police officers at a small protest being held by a half-dozen people against the city's former police chief.



This is a systemic cancer. What happened to Mr. Sterling is what we can expect when a police force becomes a gang unto itself..."

Civil Rights Attorney Adanté Pointer

The lawsuit, filed in U.S. District Court in San Francisco, is the latest in a growing number of civil rights lawsuits filed against the 100-person department since a joint investigation by the FBI and the Contra Costa District Attorney revealed numerous incidents of potential,

intentional civil rights violations, abuse of authority and perjury committed by Antioch officers.

The investigation also revealed officers engaging in assault under color of authority, distribution of steroids and cocaine, committing fraud, eliciting false confessions and taking bribes; and a web of racist, homophobic, sexist and derogatory texts which were shared among nearly half the city's officers, including supervisors.

Frank Sterling, with Berkeley-based public-funded Pacifica [radio station KPFA](#), was covering a Sept. 17, 2021 protest against the city's controversial police chief, who was retiring. There were about six protestors at odds with about 20 supporters of city police tactics, the lawsuit states.

Sterling, who is also an activist, was filming a possible unlawful arrest and officers' actions when he intervened to try and stop an officer's apparent use of excessive force on an already detained, unarmed protestor, according to the lawsuit.

"Officers dragged... Mr. Sterling face-down to the ground and twisted his legs in a manner that seemed solely intended to cause harm," the lawsuit states. "Mr. Sterling did not resist the Defendant Officers, yet they repeatedly yelled at him to stop fighting as a pretense to continue their assault on him."

As the officers pinned Sterling to the ground, one was handcuffing him as another officer “unnecessarily Tased Mr. Sterling in the lower back and buttocks,” according to the lawsuit. A charge against Sterling for allegedly resisting arrest was later dismissed.

“Abuses of power, violations of civil rights, open racism — these problems aren’t confined to just 45 percent of the Antioch Police force,” said Oakland civil rights attorney [Adanté Pointer](#), of Pointer and Buelna LLP, which filed the lawsuit.

“This is a systemic cancer,” Pointer said. “What happened to Mr. Sterling is what we can expect when a police force becomes a gang unto itself, scorning what every citizen is entitled to: law enforcement that is fair and just and, above all, respects the rights of everyone. We entrust them to protect these rights, our rights, and it appears half of Antioch PD doesn’t take that seriously.”

Sterling has focused his career on covering police brutality cases and advocates for victims of police brutality and the unhoused. This may have made him a target, the lawsuit states. His cellphone and audio recorder, seized from him during his arrest, have never been returned.

Sterling was the target of Antioch Police in 2009, when he was beaten and arrested following a noise complaint. An arresting officer, Rick Hoffman, called him “faggot” before kicking him in the face while Sterling was already in custody and on the ground. Hoffman was implicated in the racist and homophobic group texts uncovered by the joint FBI/D.A. investigators.

Criminal charges filed against Sterling in 2009 “were dropped after exculpatory video evidence was discovered in the possession of APD,” despite denying the existence of the video to Sterling and his attorney, the lawsuit states.

“This case is a stark reminder that the police are not politically neutral,” said civil rights attorney [Ty Clarke](#), of Pointer and Buelna. “This small group of activists were protesting police brutality and were met by a much larger group of confrontational police supporters. The Antioch officers decided to brutalize numerous protesters for the same conduct they allowed police supporters to do with impunity.

“Mr. Sterling was unarmed, pinned to the ground by five officers, and in the process of being handcuffed when a sixth officer ran up and Tased him. This biased, unconstitutional policing has no place in our society.”

The lawsuit is Sterling v. City of Antioch, et al; Case 3:22-cv-07558-TSH, U.S. District Court, Northern District of California.

About Pointer & Buelna, LLP, Lawyers for the People: Civil rights attorneys Adanté Pointer and Patrick Buelna started their law firm to give people a chance against large institutions like the

police, government, corporations and insurance companies. They have secured many of California's largest trial verdicts and settlements in these practice areas.

Robert Frank

Newsroom Public Relations

+1 206-790-6324

[email us here](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/630489899>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2023 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.