

THE DAILY RECORD

WESTERN NEW YORK'S SOURCE FOR LAW, REAL ESTATE, FINANCE AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE SINCE 1908

Former RIT student claims false arrest

Alleges racial profiling and assault by Rochester police officers

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A New York City man is suing the city of Rochester, the Rochester Police Department and three police officers claiming false arrest, assault and racial profiling.

Prince Sundiata Guerra, 23, claims that on Sept. 22, 2014, when he was a student at Rochester Institute of Technology, “he was ambushed by several individuals who he later learned were police officers.”

Guerra, an African-American man, claims in the suit that he was walking with friends on the sidewalk on East Avenue near Alexander Street about 12:30 a.m. when a white man “walked past him, violently bumping into his shoulder and speaking in a low intoxicated tone of voice.”

Guerra asked the man what he said and the man used a racial slur toward Guerra. When Guerra walked toward the man he was tackled by three officers



ATTY. PRATHIMA REDDY

Rochester.

The white man who bumped into Guerra was not arrested or questioned even though both men were fighting, according to the police report.

The officers never answered Guerra when he asked if he was being arrested and why he was being detained, according to the 14-page complaint.

Guerra, who now works for an aerospace company as a manufacturing engineer in the New York City area, claims in the suit that he was taken to

who punched him in the face several times. They handcuffed him and put him in the back of a police car, Guerra claims in the suit filed April 28 in U.S. District Court in

a “construction site” where an officer said: “Get out of the car and I will take the handcuffs off so we can fight one on one.”

“Mr. Guerra was terrified after this statement. He was in shock and refused to exit the vehicle for fear that he would be killed,” according to the suit.

“We allege that they put him in the back seat of the vehicle, did not tell him he was arrested, did not tell him his rights, just unlawfully detained him and started to drive around with him,” Guerra’s lawyer Prathima Reddy said.

“As he’s starting to go to a very remote construction parking lot, he’s scared for his life,” she said.

Guerra was taken to jail, charged with disorderly conduct and resisting arrest and held overnight. Later, all of the charges were dismissed.

The suit doesn’t specify damages, but asks for punitive damages and attorney’s fees.

City officials did not respond to a request for comment.