

# The Star-Ledger

**Former N.J. cop says colleagues called him a ‘terrorist’ because he’s Muslim. He’s now suing.**

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A former Asbury Park cop who said he suffered years of discrimination and retaliation is suing to get his job back.

Kamil Warraich, the department’s first Pakistani-American and second Muslim officer, was repeatedly called “Taliban” and “terrorist” by colleagues, according to a lawsuit filed Thursday in state Superior Court in Monmouth.

Supervisors passed him over for promotions while advancing white colleagues, according to the suit, and his attempts to raise concerns drew him into a bureaucratic nightmare that ultimately led to his demotion and firing.

“Mr. Warraich was a trailblazer who wanted nothing more than to serve the people of Asbury Park,” David Castellani, one of Warraich’s lawyers, said in a statement. “Unfortunately ... Mr. Warraich faced a hostile work environment created by people within the APPD who did not want to see a dark-skinned police officer.”

Warraich was fired last summer, which he believes was part of a retaliation campaign against him because he had flagged problems within the department. (Police officials said he racked up multiple disciplinary charges and failed a fitness for duty test, which he disputes, according to the complaint.)

The suit also accuses city officials and the Monmouth County Prosecutor’s Office of mishandling his complaints. Representatives for both declined comment, and a spokesman for the police department did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Warraich first joined the department in 2004, according to online pension records, and he was hired full time about three years later, according to the complaint.

During his tenure he both held prestigious positions and was accused of “insubordination,” according to the lawsuit, and officials repeatedly ignored rules and regulations whenever he said he was being treated poorly.

After he and other minority officers were kept out of union activities, he and almost a dozen predominantly black officers formed a new union last year, according to the suit and an announcement from the state’s Fraternal Order of Police. The one white cop who joined them was called a “race traitor” by other officers, according to the complaint.

Warraich also accused his predominantly white colleagues of targeting minority communities and using excessive force against residents, and he said supervisors encouraged officers to sometimes hide when they used force.

Warraich was an outlier when it came to force. The former officer previously reported using restraints, pepper spray and other types of force more than almost any other cop in New Jersey, according to The Force Report, an NJ Advance Media analysis of five-years-worth of data. No other Asbury Park officer reported using more force from 2012 through 2016, and only ten officers statewide reported higher numbers.

During that period, 87% of the people Warraich used force against were black, a larger share than the department.

“I only used force when it was justified and absolutely necessary,” Warraich wrote in an email sent by a spokesman. His numbers were high because of his work on a gang unit, he said, and they stood out because colleagues didn’t always report when they used force. Furthermore, “the color of someone’s skin was never a factor for me” when using force, he said.

The lawsuit asks for lost wages and his reinstatement as a lieutenant, among other requests.

*Staff writer S.P. Sullivan contributed to this report.*