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Date: 08/05/2022 09:11 AM
Subject: International news coverage of events in Arlington MA

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Dear Select Board,

In the event you did not see this, I share recent coverage of Arlington in The Guardian.

Please include this in Correspondence received for the next Select Board meeting, thank you.

Kind regards,
Beth Melofchik

[US officer pursuing white suspect held knee on Black man's neck, lawsuit says | Massachusetts | The Guardian](#)

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Donovan Johnson accuses Massachusetts police of wrongful arrest and search during incident in Arlington, Massach...

US officer pursuing white suspect held knee on Black man's neck, lawsuit says

Donovan Johnson accuses Massachusetts police of wrongful arrest and search during incident in Arlington, Massachusetts last year



Donovan Johnson alleges police violated his constitutional rights in the incident that took a grave emotional toll. Photograph: Irina Danilova/AP

Associated Press in Arlington, Massachusetts

Thu 4 Aug 2022 08.07 EDT

A police officer in suburban [Boston](#) who was pursuing a white suspect pinned a 20-year-old Black man to the ground and placed a knee on the man's neck despite having no evidence he was involved in any crime, according to a federal civil rights lawsuit filed on Wednesday.

Donovan Johnson was minutes from home after leaving work in February 2021 when the white officer ran up, drew his gun and threw Johnson to the snow-covered ground face first, the lawsuit filed against the town of Arlington, [Massachusetts](#), and three officers alleges.

The suit says the officer pinned Johnson to the ground by placing a knee on his neck. The complaint says Johnson yelled "I can't breathe!" but the officer "continued to pin Mr Johnson to the ground with his knee" while the white suspect "was left unattended".

The lawsuit filed in Boston federal court alleges police violated Johnson's constitutional rights when they stopped him, searched him, handcuffed him and placed him in the back of a cruiser before releasing him with no charges.

Johnson said the incident took such an emotional toll that he struggled to manage his life to the point he almost lost his job as a grants administrator for a hospital.

"I was wrongfully arrested and wrongfully searched just because of the fact that he thought I was the person that he was chasing down," Johnson said.

The Arlington police chief, Julie Flaherty, said police could not comment as neither police nor the town had yet been served the lawsuit.

Johnson's lawyers say an internal investigation found officers violated policies and procedures. One attorney, Mirian Albert of Lawyers for Civil Rights, said they hoped the case would eradicate racial profiling in the department.

"All people should feel safe in their own communities," she said. "Mr Johnson's rights were violated within view of his home and this is exactly the type of police misconduct that fuels mistrust between communities of color and law enforcement."

Police were were called to an Arlington hotel about a man who staff believed was involved in the theft of televisions, the lawsuit says. The white man was "known to police" for "prior criminal acts" and officer Steven Conroy showed a photo of the man to the front desk clerk, who said it appeared to be the same person.

Police went to a room but the man escaped and they began to chase him, according to the lawsuit. Johnson saw the man jog past before Conroy approached and yelled at both men to "get the [expletive] on the floor".

The white suspect got on his knees but Johnson stayed standing, the lawsuit says. Johnson says Conroy drew his gun, threw him to the ground and pinned him with a knee on his neck.

Another officer who arrived in a cruiser recognized the white man and put him in handcuffs and the suspect told the officer he didn't know Johnson. A third officer "immediately jumped on" Johnson to help Conroy hold him down.

Lawyers say the officers had no reason to believe Johnson was involved in any crime: police had a photo of the white suspect they were looking for, Johnson and the other man told officers they didn't know each other and "nothing in the investigation indicated that there was more than one male suspect involved".

The complaint says Johnson was released after hotel staff told officers they had never seen him before. Police left him to find his own way home.