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AG's Office to review traffic stop scuffle

Thursday March 10, 2005

TRENTON, N.J. (AP) The state Attorney General's Office will review a State Police internal affairs investigation that found three troopers acted properly during a 2002 traffic stop that is now the focus of a federal civil rights lawsuit.

The lawsuit contends that troopers Robert Parry, Frederick Fife and Craig Brown violated the civil rights of Aundrey Green by using excessive force after an April 22, 2002, traffic stop along a Cumberland County highway. Green, 32, had to be hospitalized for cuts to his head and body.

"The New Jersey State Police Office of Professional Standards conducted an internal affairs investigation of this matter and concluded that the troopers acted appropriately under the circumstances," the Attorney General's Office said in a statement. "The Attorney General has directed his Office of State Police Affairs ... to conduct an independent review of the OPS investigation to ensure that, if force was used, it was justifiable under the totality of the circumstances."

The lawsuit against the three troopers, filed in January in U.S. District Court in Camden, claims a State Police videotape of the traffic stop shows them punching and kicking Green and striking him with a flashlight.

David Jones, president of the State Troopers Fraternal Association, said the officers used appropriate force to restrain Green after he became belligerent in the back of a patrol car after his arrest and began to attack them as they opened the vehicle's door to let him urinate on the side of the road.

Once they opened the door, the troopers discovered Green had been able to slip handcuffs from his wrists, and troopers attempted to reapply the cuffs, Jones said.

"The troopers tried to take him out (of the car), and he assaulted them by kicking at their face and head and arms and he continued to assault them when he injured himself getting out of the vehicle," Jones told The Star-Ledger of Newark for Thursday's newspapers. "They did nothing but fend off his attacks, and when they got him out of the vehicle, his own riotous behavior caused these injuries."

Jones said one of the troopers sustained a broken nose, and another suffered a knee injury during the incident. A third suffered a broken thumb while struggling to subdue Green at the hospital after he attacked two medical workers, Jones said.

Green pleaded guilty in 2003 to two counts of aggravated assault on a law enforcement officer and was sentenced to 11 months in prison.

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"This case was a slam-dunk assault on a trooper. There's nothing to it," Jones said. "He pushed the envelope where we had to stop him. The attorney's looking for a payday."

But Green's attorney, Vincent Sanzone Jr., said there is no indication on the tape that Green resisted arrest or attempted to kick at the officers while in the back of the patrol car. He also denied that Green had ever slipped out of the handcuffs.

"The officers are never seen (on the videotape) getting hit or kicked," he said. "It never happened. When you get caught doing something wrong you start a cover-up. It shows their motive."

Information from: The Star-Ledger, <http://www.nj.com/starledger>

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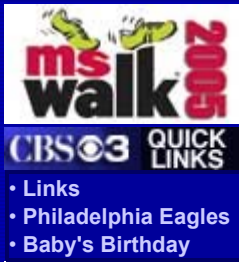
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