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Ronald Lanier said he plans to sue the Garden City Police Department and Garden City Village. ■ Video: [newsday.com/nassau](https://www.newsday.com/nassau)

Cops face suit

- Retired correction officer says police beat him
- Says Garden City officers mistook him for suspect

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A retired Nassau County correction officer yesterday said Garden City police officers this week mistook him for a shoplifting suspect and beat him after they threw him to the ground and handcuffed him.

Ronald Lanier, 53, who is African-American, said he was shopping for cooking oil on Wednesday at the Western Beef supermarket in Mineola, near where he lives, when two white officers approached him from behind and ordered him to put his hands behind his back.

Lanier, who said he complied, asked the officers what was going on, then told them, "I am on the job" — a line law enforcement officers use to identify themselves to one another.

The officers, Lanier said, didn't believe him. Instead, he said, they mocked him and

punched him in the head and body while he was held on the ground. The beating only stopped, Lanier said, after he urged fellow shoppers to record the incident on their smartphones.

"I was stripped of my service, stripped of my humanity, stripped of my dignity," a tearful Lanier said yesterday at a news conference in Hempstead.

Lanier said he was treated for bruises at Winthrop-University Hospital in Mineola.

Garden City Police Insp. Michael J. Doyle yesterday declined to comment on the allegations.

Lanier, who served in the U.S. Army and volunteered at Ground Zero after 9/11, has notified the Garden City Police Department and Garden City Village that he intends to sue.

"The reason this happened was not because he was doing anything wrong, but because they say they were looking for



Stephen Wilson, 49, of Rosedale, Queens

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other man in the supermarket that day. That man, Stephen Wilson, 49, of Rosedale, Queens, attempted to steal two designer handbags from the Lord & Taylor department store in Garden City about 6:30 p.m., according to Doyle. When confronted by store security, Wilson dropped the handbags and fled.

A Garden City police officer saw Wilson get into a gray Acura and gave chase in his patrol car, Doyle said.

Doyle said Wilson abandoned his car on the Long Island Rail Road tracks and ran into Western Beef, where he was arrested shortly after the incident with Lanier, who was released.

Wilson was charged with petty larceny, unlawfully fleeing a police officer, reckless driving and driving with a suspended license, Doyle said.

Lanier said yesterday that Wilson, who is African-American, is "a hundred pounds" heavier than him and was wearing brown clothing the day of his arrest. Lanier said he was clad in black.

Doyle would not provide Wilson's weight or height.

a black man," said Lanier's attorney, Frederick Brewington, of Hempstead. "And, the black man just happens to be an officer who was in the store. Not every black man is a suspect."

Garden City Village Mayor Nicholas P. Episcopia did not return calls seeking comment. Neither Episcopia nor the police department would name the officers accused of the beating.

Doyle said in a statement that his officers arrested an-