

Ex-Police Officer Files Suit Against Village, Claims Fog Used To Kill COVID-19 Virus Made Him Sick

by Sanford Schmidt
August 25 2021 9:26 AM



GLEN CARBON - An ex-Glen Carbon police officer has filed suit against the village and its police chief claiming a fog used to kill the COVID-19 virus made him sick.

Bronson Painter also claims wrongful discharge for pursuing a workman's comp claim and for making regular complaints about the fogging chemical SSS DC Gold Cleaner, used to suppress COVID-19.

In addition to the village, Painter has named Police Chief Todd A. Link in the suit. Neither a spokesman for the village nor Link could be reached for comment.

Painter claims in Spring of 2020, a village public works employee had recommended a less expensive way to sanitize the village buildings with a chemical called, “Gold Cleaner.” Painter also claims the chief approved the cheaper cleaner to sanitize the police department.

The plaintiff claims that in March, the village began using the Gold Cleaner, but Painter developed a nagging, continual cough, and sore and itchy throat.

He claims in his suit made public Monday that during a fogging operation, he walked unknowingly went into a cloud of the chemical. “Plaintiff immediately felt a stinging and burning sensation in his eyes, nose, and throat. Plaintiff’s tongue started to go numb. Plaintiff started coughing. Plaintiff left the area as quickly as he could,” the complaint states.

Painter states he notified his supervisors about the illness. He continued to suffer symptoms, he said. He said he was told to do some research on the chemical, and he contacted a village employee responsible for the fogging, who said it was cheaper than other options.

The plaintiff later claimed his supervisors, including Link, accused Painter during a meeting of frightening and intimidating the public works employee. “During the meeting, Link accused plaintiff of being mentally unstable,” the suit states. The chief later made a similar complaint and ordered a psychological evaluation.

On Sept. 11, a doctor reported that Painter was mentally stable and fit for duty. A pulmonologist also reported that Painter suffered from “reactive airway disease” and recommended he avoid any more irritants. On Sept. 24, Painter passed the fit for duty test, the suit claims.

In February, Painter filed a grievance with his union. Painter was fired on March 25 for “bullying his supervisor” and “performance failures.”

The suit does not ask for a dollar amount but asks for back pay with interest, compensatory damages for emotional distress, punitive damages, interest, and attorney’s fees. Painter is represented by Sarah Jane Hunt of St. Louis.