

Chicago Tribune

Lawsuit: Harvey mayor, cop threatened murder frame-up

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Javon Patterson (Tribune / David Pierini)

A south suburban man alleges in a federal civil lawsuit that Harvey Mayor Eric Kellogg and a now-convicted Harvey police detective threatened to frame him for murder, then fabricated a gun charge for not returning their stolen cocaine.

The allegations are some of the most explosive and serious leveled against Harvey, which has been sued dozens of times by people claiming police brutality and excessive force, among other things, records show. The city's record of unsolved violent crimes also has prompted the FBI, state and county agencies to raid the department in recent years.

In a statement, Harvey officials said they would "vigorously" defend allegations in the lawsuit.

"Even a cursory review of this complainant's allegations shows a serious disregard for the truth," the statement said.

In the lawsuit filed March 5, Javon Patterson alleges that in January 2006 an acquaintance, Willie Lloyd III, said he planned to steal Harvey Detective Hollis Dorrough's large cocaine stash and needed Patterson to be the lookout. Patterson declined, saying he was on parole and needed to straighten out his life, the lawsuit says.

But after Lloyd stole the cocaine, Dorrough and Harvey Ald. Keith Price allegedly pinned the theft on Patterson and told him if he didn't return the drugs they would "put a case" on him, the lawsuit alleges. Price said the claims in the lawsuit are false.

In April 2006 Lloyd was found dead with a gunshot wound to the neck in a Harvey alley. His homicide remains an open investigation, Harvey spokeswoman Sandra Alvarado said.

About two weeks after Lloyd's death, Patterson was helping an elderly neighbor carry boxes and groceries into her home when two Harvey police officers arrested him, claiming Patterson was illegally carrying a firearm as a convicted felon. Witnesses say they saw officers pull paper and money from Patterson's pockets but no weapon, court records show.

At the police department, Kellogg and Dorrough allegedly told Patterson they knew Lloyd stole their cocaine and brought it to Patterson's home, the lawsuit alleges. Patterson told them he did not have their cocaine, the lawsuit claims.

Kellogg then allegedly told Patterson to leave Harvey and never return or Kellogg would frame him for a murder, the lawsuit says.

Dorrough is serving three years in prison for illegally returning a gun to a gang member's family. He testified in court that Kellogg told him to do it. Kellogg has not been charged with any wrongdoing.

The FBI contacted Patterson about a month before his arrest, claiming they knew Dorrough would "put a case on him" and asking Patterson to wear a wire, the lawsuit said. Patterson refused, fearing for his safety. FBI spokesman Ross Rice had no comment today.

As a result of the gun charge in Harvey and his previous convictions for armed robbery and unlawful use of a weapon, Patterson was convicted of being an armed habitual criminal. An appeals court later overturned that

conviction and the state issued Patterson a certificate of innocence, a document given to those a circuit court determines were wrongly jailed.

About a dozen people have received a certificate of innocence, which is a significant feat, said Karen Daniel, a law professor at Northwestern University's Center on Wrongful Convictions.

"That is huge psychologically to have that statement, somebody acknowledging their innocence," Daniel said.

The certificate gives Patterson, 29, a solid case, said his attorney, Robert Stephenson.

In the meantime, Patterson says he is living in fear of retaliation and intimidation by Harvey authorities.

"My mama, she can't sleep at night because we still don't know what the retaliation is going to be," Patterson said.

He said he wants justice for sitting behind bars for 2½ years for the Harvey conviction. He hopes to collect about \$86,000 in state compensation for the time he served, and Patterson wants a jury to decide how much, if any, money he should receive in damages from the lawsuit he has filed against Kellogg, Dorrough, Price and three former Harvey police officers.

The former barber said he's trying to find a job and rebuild a relationship with his 12-year-son after his stint in prison.

"It's kind of hard when you're trying to come back into society, especially when I'm trying to convince my son and the family that I really didn't do what they said I did," Patterson said. "It's eating me up every day."

--Kristen Schorsch

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