

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

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CARLTON PRESTON,

Plaintiff,

-against-

CITY OF NEW YORK; Police Officer MICHAEL RELF, Shield No. 20351; and JOHN and JANE DOE 1 through 10, individually and in their official capacities (the names John and Jane Doe being fictitious, as the true names are presently unknown),

Defendants.

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COMPLAINT

Jury Trial Demanded

NATURE OF THE ACTION

1. This is an action to recover money damages arising out of the violation of plaintiff's rights under the Constitution.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

2. This action is brought pursuant to 42 U.S.C. §§ 1983 and 1988, and the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution of the United States.

3. The jurisdiction of this Court is predicated upon 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331, 1343 and 1367(a).

4. Venue is proper in this district pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1391 (b) and (c).

JURY DEMAND

5. Plaintiff demands a trial by jury in this action.

PARTIES

6. Plaintiff Carlton Preston (“plaintiff” or “Mr. Preston”) is a resident of Monroe County in the City and State of Pennsylvania.

7. Defendant City of New York is a municipal corporation organized under the laws of the State of New York. It operates the NYPD, a department or agency of defendant City of New York responsible for the appointment, training, supervision, promotion and discipline of police officers and supervisory police officers, including the individually named defendants herein.

8. At all times relevant, defendant Police Officer Michael Relf (“Relf”), Shield No. 20351 was a police officer, acting as an agent, servant and employee of defendant City of New York and the NYPD. Defendant is sued in his individual capacity.

9. At all times relevant herein, defendants John and Jane Doe 1 through 10 were acting as agents, servants and employees of defendant City of New York and the NYPD. Defendants John and Jane Doe 1 through 10 are sued in their individual capacities.

10. At all times relevant herein, all individual defendants were acting under color of state law.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

11. On or about January 20, 2014, Mr. Preston was lawfully within the vicinity of 45th Street and Broadway selling merchandise at a table.

12. He made a sale valued at approximately \$20, when police officers arrived and began to ask him for his identification.

13. The officers, including Relf, proceeded to arrest Mr. Preston.

14. Mr. Preston was taken to the precinct, where officers falsely claimed that plaintiff had closely approached and placed his hands on pedestrians' hands as they passed. In fact, Mr. Preston never stepped in front of his table when attempting to make a sale.

15. The officers fabricated these statements and prepared these documents in an effort to cover-up their false arrest of Mr. Preston.

16. Mr. Preston was then arraigned on charges of Aggressive Begging in a Public Place.

17. He was then taken into custody, where he remained for three to four days.

18. After several court appearances over the course of a year, the charges against Plaintiff were ultimately dismissed.

19. Plaintiff was deprived of his liberty, suffered emotional distress, mental anguish, fear, pain, bodily injury, anxiety, embarrassment, humiliation, and damage to his reputation.

FIRST CLAIM
42 U.S.C. § 1983

20. Plaintiff repeats and re-alleges each and every allegation as if fully set forth herein.

21. Defendants, by their conduct toward plaintiffs alleged herein, violated plaintiff's rights guaranteed by 42 U.S.C. § 1983, the Fourth, Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution of the United States.

22. As a direct and proximate result of this unlawful conduct, Plaintiff sustained the damages hereinbefore alleged.

SECOND CLAIM
Unlawful Stop and Search

23. Plaintiff repeats and realleges each and every allegation as if fully set forth herein.

24. Defendants violated the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments because they stopped and searched plaintiff without reasonable suspicion.

25. As a direct and proximate result of this unlawful conduct, plaintiff sustained the damages herein before alleged.

THIRD CLAIM

False Arrest

26. Plaintiff repeats and realleges each and every allegation as if fully set forth herein.

27. Defendants violated the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments because they arrested plaintiff without probable cause.

28. As a direct and proximate result of this unlawful conduct, plaintiff sustained the damages hereinbefore alleged.

FOURTH CLAIM

Malicious Prosecution

29. Plaintiff repeats and realleges each and every allegation as if fully set forth herein.

30. By their conduct, as described herein, and acting under color of state law, defendants are liable to plaintiff under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 for the violation of plaintiff's constitutional right to be free from malicious prosecution under the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution.

31. Defendants' unlawful actions were done willfully, knowingly, with malice and with the specific intent to deprive plaintiff of his constitutional rights. The prosecution by defendants of plaintiff constituted malicious prosecution in that there was no basis for the plaintiff's arrest, yet defendants continued with the prosecution, which was resolved in plaintiff's favor.

32. As a direct and proximate result of defendants' unlawful actions, plaintiffs have suffered, and will continue to suffer, damages, including physical, mental and emotional injury and pain, mental anguish, suffering, humiliation, embarrassment and loss of reputation.

FIFTH CLAIM
Failure To Intervene

33. Plaintiff repeats and realleges each and every allegation as if fully set forth herein.

34. Those defendants that were present but did not actively participate in the aforementioned unlawful conduct observed such conduct, had an opportunity prevent such conduct, had a duty to intervene and prevent such conduct and failed to intervene.

35. Accordingly, the defendants who failed to intervene violated the First, Fourth, Fifth And Fourteenth Amendments.

36. As a direct and proximate result of this unlawful conduct, Plaintiff sustained the damages hereinbefore alleged.

SIXTH CLAIM
Denial Of Constitutional Right To Fair Trial

37. Plaintiff repeats and realleges each and every allegation as if fully set forth herein.

38. The individual defendants created false evidence against plaintiff.

39. The individual defendants forwarded false evidence to prosecutors in the District Attorney's office.

40. In creating false evidence against plaintiff, and in forwarding false information to prosecutors, the individual defendants violated plaintiff's constitutional right to a fair trial under the Due Process Clause of the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments of the United States Constitution.

41. As a direct and proximate result of this unlawful conduct, plaintiff sustained the damages hereinbefore alleged.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, plaintiff respectfully requests judgment against defendants as follows:

- (a) Compensatory damages against all defendants, jointly and severally;
- (b) Punitive damages against the individual defendants, jointly and severally;
- (c) Reasonable attorneys' fees and costs pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1988; and
- (d) Such other and further relief as this Court deems just and proper.

DATED: December 23, 2016
New York, New York

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Juliene Munar
Wright & Marinelli LLP
305 Broadway, Suite 1001
New York, New York 10007
(212) 822-1427

Attorney for plaintiff