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## Suit claims police retaliated after techie criticized radar accuracy

By Mark Scoloro, Associated Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. — A state police technician has filed a federal lawsuit claiming his supervisors threatened to fire him after he testified in a court case that a widely used radar gun is prone to false readings.



Tim Shingara alleges he was deprived of his free-speech rights and defamed after giving testimony.

Bradley C Bower / AP

John T. "Tim" Shingara, 55, alleges he was deprived of his free-speech rights and defamed after giving testimony in September that criticized the hand-held Genesis GHS units.

"I testified accurately, truly, with documentation in a court of law, doing my job as a professional. I had nothing to gain by doing this — this is what's amazing about the case," Shingara said Monday.

The lawsuit, filed last week in U.S. Middle District Court in Harrisburg, names as defendants Cumberland County deputy prosecutor Jaime M. Keating, Decatur Electronics Inc. president Robert E. Sanner, and three state police supervisors: Kathy A. Skiles, Maj. Wesley R. Waugh, and Lt. Col. Ralph M. Periandi.

"The defendants embarked upon a course of action to discredit (Shingara), to lie to the press and the public about the truth regarding the Genesis radar gun, and also engaged in efforts to intimidate and deter the plaintiff from speaking out," according to the suit.

The defense lawyer for a motorist ticketed for allegedly going 70 mph in a 45 mph zone in Cumberland County subpoenaed Shingara after asking around about who within the state police was most familiar with the radar units' technical aspects.

Keating withdrew the ticket after Shingara testified the radar guns were known to mistake the whine of alternators in some Ford Crown Victorias for speeding drivers.

After that, Shingara's "job was threatened, he was subjected to a gag order, he was defamed and ridiculed in public, and he is being unlawfully investigated and disciplined," according to the suit.

Examples of alleged retaliation cited in the suit include a threat he would be fired, a gag order issued by the department against him and statements to others that Shingara was a "disgruntled employee."

"When you start retaliating against an employee for testifying truthfully in a court of law, that's going too far," said Shingara's lawyer, Don Bailey.

Shingara, a radio telecommunications specialist assigned to departmental headquarters, said a "prediscipline

hearing" has been held but no discipline has resulted so far.

Skiles, Waugh, Periandi and Sanner are accused of conspiring to deprive Shingara of his First Amendment rights. Keating, Periandi and Sanner are being sued for defamation. State police spokeswoman Trooper Linette G. Quinn declined comment on the lawsuit, and neither the agency officials named nor Keating returned phone messages seeking comment Monday.

Sanner, primary owner of the Decatur, Ill.-based manufacturer, said he has not defamed Shingara.

"I don' t remember saying anything about him, and I don' t know to whom I would have said it," he said.

Decatur Electronics' internal studies indicate the radar guns, which are no longer being produced, will not generate an improper ticket if used by a trained operator, Sanner said.

The state police suspended the use of its 572 GHS units in late-model Crown Victorias immediately after Shingara' s Cumberland County testimony. Quinn said an internal study concluded they were accurate and their use was resumed in December.

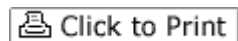
The department is convinced the malfunction has not generated a single bogus ticket, she said.

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