

# \$25M lawsuit filed against South Boston police department, town

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**Linwood Raymond Lambert Jr.**

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Posted on May 22, 2015  
by **Paula Bryant**

The sister of a 46-year-old man who died in police custody has filed a \$25 million civil lawsuit against the South Boston Police Department and Town of South Boston.

Linwood Raymond Lambert Jr. died after officers stunned him with a taser on May 4, 2013 after taking him into custody at the Super 8 Motel on U. S. 58 in South Boston, according to the lawsuit filed April 29 in U. S. District Court in Danville.

Gwendolyn Smalls of Richmond, who is named as the administrator of Lambert's estate, filed the lawsuit that names Chief Jim Binner, Deputy Chief Brian K. Lovelace, the Town of South Boston and unnamed police officers as defendants.

The civil suit seeking money damages was filed by a Philadelphia law firm, Messa & Associates.

The lawsuit alleges during the early morning hours on May 4, 2013, an unarmed Lambert agreed to go with police officers to Halifax Regional Hospital for treatment of an apparent medical/psychiatric condition.

After arriving at the hospital, instead of bringing him inside, the suit alleges officers tasered him multiple times outside the emergency room doors and left the hospital grounds with him.

Lambert suffered cardiac arrest forcing officers to return him to the hospital an hour later.



According to the suit, while defendants were depriving him of necessary medical treatment, Lambert suffered cardiac arrest and died.

“The defendants’ callous disregard for Linwood Lambert, in tasing him multiple times and depriving him of the desperate medical care he needed, violated his constitutional rights to be free from cruel and unusual punishment,” the suit continues.

The 31-page federal suit accuses the South Boston Police Department and Town of South Boston of conspiring to cover up the deprivation of Lambert’s civil rights and conceal the conduct of the unknown officers.

The unnamed officers are accused of conspiring to deny Lambert timely medical attention which resulted in “his unnecessary and untimely death.”

According to the timeline presented in the suit, Lambert checked into the Super 8 Motel around 11 p.m.

Early the next morning, the night shift front desk clerk heard the sound of metal banging on metal near Room 109 where Lambert was registered.

At approximately 4:30 a.m. she notified South Boston Police who responded to the hotel for the third time that evening.

The unnamed officers requested Lambert leave the hotel with them, and he voluntarily left.

According to the suit, Lambert’s exact whereabouts from 5 a.m. to 6:06 a.m. are unknown because defendants “have refused to supply plaintiff with investigative materials including the police report.”

According to records from Halifax Regional Hospital, the suit said Lambert arrived at the hospital at 6:06 a.m. and was “in full cardiac and respiratory arrest and intubated connected to auto pulse.”

Medical records further state Lambert went into cardiac arrest “when he was in jail.”

The autopsy report states Lambert “was tazed at distant contact range” and an “external examination revealed three punctures, suggestive of tazer barb sites, on the right and left flanks” indicating police tasered him multiple times, the suit claims.

The suit also maintains Lambert was unarmed and non-threatening at the time he was accosted by the unnamed officers who set into motion events and actions which led to the death of Lambert.

It also alleges Lambert “was not observed to have committed any crime” by the officers and was not engaged in criminal conduct at the time he came into contact with the officers.

Through the use of press releases and “leaks,” the suit contends the defendants created the impression officers acted properly.

Lovelace told the press “that Lambert died after being taken into police custody for being disorderly and causing property damage at the Super 8 Motel in Riverdale.

“The false and/or misleading statements made by Deputy Chief Lovelace were made in an attempt to justify the indefensible actions” of officers “while knowing that such representation and details were false or misleading,” the lawsuit states.

The suit accuses officers of routinely violating the civil rights of persons in all walks of life by using taser guns.

It continues suggesting the defendants including the town and police department “routinely allow their improperly and inadequately trained police officer to use taser weapons without proper training.”

In addition to \$25 million compensatory and punitive damages, Lambert’s sister is seeking attorney’s fees, interest and costs including damages for funeral and medical expenses and conscious pain and suffering.

Smalls is seeking a jury trial.