

# Officer sues over her arrest for trying to halt cop questioning

## Federal suit asks damages for emotional stress

By Matt O'Connor  
Tribune staff reporter

A fourth-generation Chicago police officer filed a federal lawsuit Thursday alleging she was arrested by detectives on trumped-up charges last year when she tried to stop further questioning of her teenage son about a murder.

The lawsuit filed by Officer Bridget McLaughlin alleged she was arrested on bogus charges of obstruction of jus-

tice and battery in August 2003 when she sought to end an interview of her 14-year-old son after Calumet Area detectives accused him of wrongdoing.

The charges against McLaughlin were dismissed almost a year later, but in the meantime, she had been relieved of her police powers, reassigned to desk duty and ordered to submit to psychological testing, the suit said.

McLaughlin's lawyer, Jon Loevy, said the suit raises troubling questions about the Chicago Police Department's policy when parents seek to end interviews of juvenile children, particularly because McLaughlin herself is a 12-year police veteran.

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—Jon Loevy, lawyer for Officer Bridget McLaughlin

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Jennifer Hoyle, a spokeswoman for the city's Law Department, said she hadn't seen a copy of the lawsuit and declined to comment.

The suit, which seeks unspecified damages from the city and six Chicago police officials,

contends McLaughlin and her son suffered emotional distress.

In August 2003, Calumet Area detectives questioned McLaughlin's son about the fatal shooting of Police Sgt. Francis Skroch IV, according to the suit. Skroch's son, a friend of McLaughlin's son, was charged with first-degree murder.

The suit contended that the night of the shooting, detectives

questioned McLaughlin's son about his telephone conversation with Skroch's son earlier that day. McLaughlin tried to stop the interrogation when detectives accused her son of involvement in the murder, the suit said.

But Detective Milton Owens allegedly refused to let them go, backing McLaughlin into a corner and threatening to arrest

her when she wouldn't sit down, the suit alleged.

At one point, Watch Cmdr. Walter Green gestured for her to leave, but Owens allegedly blocked her son from exiting, the suit alleged.

The second time McLaughlin reached for her son, she was arrested, the suit said. Crying and upset, she was handcuffed to a wall and left alone, it said.