

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: DECEMBER 5, 2006

Contact: Ilann M. Maazel, Emery Celli Brinckerhoff & Abady LLP, (212) 763-5000
Katherine Rosenfeld, Emery Celli Brinckerhoff & Abady LLP, (212) 763-5000

Arab-American Member of Elite NYPD Antiterrorism Unit Files Federal Suit for Religious and Racial Discrimination

*Hundreds of Hateful, Racist Emails Were Condoned at the Highest
Levels of the NYPD's Intelligence Division for Over Three Years*

NEW YORK, NY—Today, a decorated Arab-American and Muslim member of the elite NYPD Antiterrorism Cyber Unit filed a federal civil rights lawsuit to redress years of racial and religious harassment by the NYPD.¹ As part of his work preventing terrorist attacks against New York City, Plaintiff was regularly required to read email briefings stating that “a good Muslim” can’t be a “good American,” that Muslims should not be hired in “sensitive positions,” that Arabs are “backwards,” and that Islam is not “respectable.” These emails, and hundreds of others, were sent on a daily basis for a period of years, not just to plaintiff, but to his colleagues, supervisors, and to hundreds of personnel at all levels of the NYPD Intelligence Division. Notwithstanding plaintiff’s repeated pleas, nothing was done to stop these offensive, degrading, and humiliating attacks.

The emails were only a part of a culture of discrimination against Muslims and Arab-Americans within the Division. Others in the Division made anti-Muslim comments and jokes, saying that Muslims are only fit to drive hot dog carts, or (as said recently by a high-ranking supervisor in the Cyber Unit), that “All Arabs are animals.” Plaintiff even received an anonymous note on his desk suggesting he apply for work with Al Qaeda.

Plaintiff is a proud American and a patriot. He was awarded a Certificate of Outstanding Duty for his “heroic efforts following the World Trade Center disaster.” Years of on-the-job hate mail and other degrading treatment, however, have left him depressed and demoralized.

“No one should have to suffer discrimination in order to defend his country,” said Ilann Margalit Maazel, lead counsel for plaintiff, and a lawyer at Emery Celli Brinckerhoff & Abady. “These hate-filled messages were known right up the chain of command, yet persisted for years. There should be no room for prejudice within the NYPD, against Arab-Americans, Muslims, or anyone.”

¹Due to his undercover status, plaintiff is referred to as “John Doe.”

The NYPD has touted the Cyber Unit as a national model law enforcement project, strengthened by its diversity. The Unit has been featured on *60 Minutes*, and in *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New Yorker*, and the *New York Daily News*.

The suit was filed this morning in a Manhattan federal court under the caption *John Doe Anti-Terrorism Officer v. City of New York*.