
**IN THE UNITED STATES FEDERAL DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF OHIO, WESTERN DIVISION**

**CAITLIN TAYLOR, MAX TAYLOR,
L.J.T. (MINOR) and L.I.T. (MINOR)**
2902 East Carleton Road
Adrian, Michigan 49221

As Plaintiffs,

v.

**SYLVANIA TOWNSHIP
POLICE DEPARTMENT**
4420 King Road
Sylvania Township, Ohio 43560

And,

OFFICER JOHN A. TANNER, JR.
[Home Address Omitted for Privacy]
4420 King Road
Sylvania Township, Ohio 43560

And,

OFFICER MICHAEL WYATT
[Home Address Omitted for Privacy]
4420 King Road
Sylvania Township, Ohio 43560

As Defendants.

Case No.:

Judge:

**COMPLAINT AND JURY
TRIAL DEMAND**

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COMPLAINT AND JURY TRIAL DEMAND

PARTIES AND JURISDICTION

1. This action is brought forth by Plaintiff Caitlin Taylor, *et. al.*, under the potential legal theories of battery, assault, violation of U.S. Constitution and 42 U.S.C. § 1983 (2023), and negligence also referred to as reckless or conscious disregard for rights.
2. Plaintiff Caitlin Taylor is an individual and citizen of Michigan and the United States of America. Caitlin's domicile is in Michigan, and she resides at 2902 East Carleton Road, Adrian, Michigan 49221.
3. Plaintiff Max Taylor is an individual and citizen of Michigan and the United States of America. Max's domicile is in Michigan, and he resides at 2902 East Carleton Road, Adrian, Michigan 49221.
4. Plaintiff L.J.T. is an individual, minor, and citizen of Michigan and the United States of America. L.J.T. brings forth this action through his parents and natural and legal guardians, Caitlin and Max, and L.J.T.'s domicile is in Michigan, and he resides at 2902 East Carleton Road, Adrian, Michigan 49221.
5. Plaintiff L.I.T. is an individual, minor, and citizen of Michigan and the United States of America. L.I.T. brings forth this action through his parents and natural and legal guardians, Caitlin and Max, and L.I.T.'s domicile is in Michigan, and he resides at 2902 East Carleton Road, Adrian, Michigan 49221.
6. Defendants are the Sylvania Township Police Department and two of its agent-officers, Officer John Tanner and Officer Michael Wyatt, who are being pursued in this action in their official and individual capacities.

7. The Sylvania Township Police Department is an entity which operates and is located in Ohio and the United States of America. It is located at 4420 King Road, Sylvania Township, Ohio 43560.
8. Officer John Tanner is an individual and citizen of Ohio and the United States of America. Officer Tanner is an officer and agent of the Sylvania Township Police Department and has authority to act as a state actor under the color of law. Officer Tanner works and operates in his professional capacity as an agent-officer at 4420 King Road, Sylvania Township, Ohio 43560. Officer Tanner's domicile is located at [Home Address Omitted for Officer's Privacy].
9. Officer Michael Wyatt is an individual and citizen of Ohio and the United States of America. Officer Wyatt is an officer and agent of the Sylvania Township Police Department and has authority to act as a state actor under the color of law. Officer Wyatt works and operates in his professional capacity as an agent-officer at 4420 King Road, Sylvania Township, Ohio 43560. Officer Wyatt's domicile is located at [Home Address Omitted for Officer's Privacy].
10. The parties are subject to the Court's jurisdiction and venue.
11. Jurisdiction is proper in this Court pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 and 1343 (2023), because the controversy arises under the U.S. Constitution and 42 U.S.C. § 1983. This Court has authority attorney's fees pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1988 (2023).
12. Venue is proper in this Court pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b)(2) (2023), because the events giving rise to this complaint happened in this district.

GENERAL FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS COMMON TO ALL COUNTS

13. On June 5, 2020, Officer John Tanner allegedly observed Plaintiff in traffic and allegedly verified the vehicle registration of Plaintiff.
14. Officer Tanner then, apparently, discreetly followed Plaintiff from the intersection of West Bancroft Street and North McCord Road, to 2356 Parliament Square, Toledo, Ohio 43617.
15. Plaintiff pulled into the driveway of 2356 Parliament Square Toledo, Ohio 43617, and she was sitting there for a minute or so because she was lost.
16. Plaintiff was in that specific neighborhood complex delivering groceries, because that is how she worked to contribute to her household at the time.
17. Plaintiff was sitting in a driveway within the complex, but it was the wrong address for the delivery.
18. The right address was within the complex, just not the house Plaintiff was parked in front.
19. As Plaintiff was in the driveway of that wrong house, sitting there gathering herself to plan to find her delivery destination because, again, it was not that particular condo/home in the complex, Officer Tanner's vehicle stealthily approached Plaintiff's vehicle.
20. Without Plaintiff seeing him there, she began to back her vehicle up with the intent of driving around the complex to find the correct address so she could deliver the groceries and earn her pay.
21. As she was beginning to back out of that wrong house's driveway, Officer Tanner was parked there in a position where he was not readily visible to Plaintiff.

22. As Officer Tanner exited his vehicle, he turned on his overhead lights to seemingly get Plaintiff's attention or intimate her.
23. Officer Tanner drew his firearm and kneeled behind the vehicle door, in further effort to intimidate and harass Plaintiff as if he suspected she was there to make a drug deliver or rob the neighborhood.
24. Plaintiff did have Michigan license plates and the tags were expired, but in Michigan the authorities were extending deadlines and not enforcing the related laws because it was post-covid era and it was not an issue for Plaintiff.
25. Regardless of whether the minor misdemeanor, expired tags was the concern or not, Officer Tanner held his firearm up and pointed it at Plaintiff as he was behind his door, again likely to intimidate Plaintiff and place her in imminent fear or apprehension of bodily harm.
26. So rather than providing clear and concise instructions to de-escalate a situation he created, because at no point was Plaintiff anything more than a confused U.S. citizen who was lost and worried about making a grocery delivery on time, Officer Tanner began to shout several confusing verbal commands at the same time, which confused Plaintiff even more than she was already in dealing with a shouting, angry, dominate police officer.
27. Officer Tanner was stating conflicting and confusing commands such as demanding Plaintiff raise her hands up, but, at the same time, to shut her vehicle off and take keys out of the ignition and drop them out of the vehicle.

28. Under state law and policy, officers such as Officer Tanner are trained to deal with high-stress situations, and this situation did not warrant such a response from Officer Tanner.
29. The confusing and conflicting commands given by Officer Tanner were not in line with proper police training, and he was the catalyst to the escalating situation.
30. Plaintiff, confused and frightened, had rolled down her car window and when given the multiple conflicting and confusing verbal commands.
31. She was confused and needed the officers to explain, but she was never a threat.
32. Plaintiff was ordered out of her vehicle, and she complied with the multiple conflicting commands of Officer Tanner and removed herself from the vehicle.
33. Plaintiff asked Officer Tanner what was going on and was confused why she was being stopped and threatened.
34. Officer Tanner then requested additional units to assist in Plaintiff's detainment.
35. Officer Tanner then switched from his firearm to his taser and approached Plaintiff.
36. Officer Tanner attempted to restrain her without informing Plaintiff as to why she was being detained.
37. Without any explanation, Plaintiff was then attacked, grabbed, manhandled, spun around, and slammed to ground, all by Officer Tanner.
38. Officer Tanner had her in a body restraint which seemingly was intended to cut off her ability to move, as he then slammed her to the ground and against the vehicle.
39. Plaintiff never received clear understanding at that point, from the officer.

40. Plaintiff, who has experienced past trauma with physical and verbal abuse, stated to the police as she was being manhandled that she did not want to be arrested and again asked why she was being arrested.
41. Officer Wyatt had arrived on scene to assist Officer Tanner in Plaintiff's apprehension.
42. In an attempt to seemingly restrain her in as much of a dominant way possible, Officer Tanner threw himself on top of Plaintiff and Officer Wyatt held her in a chokehold, to seemingly cut off her respiration and perhaps render her unconscious.
43. Plaintiff repeatedly asked why she was being arrested, to which the officers replied, "for obstructing," but he never once mentioned to Plaintiff expired tags or her driving.
44. During this altercation Plaintiff screamed for help, as her past traumatic experiences triggered her to react in a self-preserving manner.
45. Plaintiff was taken off the ground and placed on her feet where handcuffs were unnecessarily, tightly placed on her.
46. Officers Tanner and Wyatt had no justifiable cause or reason to handcuff Plaintiff and to go to such extremes to apprehend her since Plaintiff never was alleged to have committed a felony, there were no exigent circumstance, and Plaintiff posed no threat to anyone in the neighbor or at the scene.
47. The officers outnumbered Plaintiff two-to-one, and the manner of her detainment not just was unwarranted, but it was a disproportional use of excessive and unjustifiable force by officers acting under color of law.
48. Unlike other police force fact patterns where officers may be justified in their actions, in this circumstance, there was no split-second judgment or tense, uncertain, and

rapidly evolving situation that could justify deference to the officer's judgment on how much force was necessary in the situation.

49. After being assaulted, battered, and bruised, Plaintiff was then arrested and escorted to the police vehicle and held for four hours.
50. While she was sitting in the police vehicle, and being read her rights, three more officers arrived on scene to search Plaintiff's car several times.
51. Plaintiff was not viewed by a healthcare professional until after she was released, and she visited the Promedica Hospital in Adrian, Michigan and reported the injuries attributed to the officers who attacked her unjustifiably.
52. She was left with bruises all throughout her body including her hands, arms, legs, abdomen, buttocks, back, neck, shoulders, and wrists.
53. Plaintiff even bled from the tightness of her handcuffs.
54. Plaintiff quit her grocery delivering job and started a new line of work after the altercation with Sylvania Township Police, as she was traumatized and cannot bear the reality that it could happen again while she is delivering groceries if someone calls in to authorities and reports her a suspicious person for just being lost.
55. Plaintiff was unable to find work and feared even entering a vehicle for several weeks following the incident, and she did not make the income she was making while working the grocery delivery job.
56. Even though Officers Tanner and Wyatt did not know of Plaintiff's past with verbal and physical abuse, they must take her "as is" and their actions, already being excessive for anyone, were exacerbated to Plaintiff.

57. Plaintiff has experienced physical pain, mental anguish, humiliation, emotional distress, loss of enjoyment of life, and other non-pecuniary losses since her arrest.

58. Her family members, the other named Plaintiffs, her husband and two children, have also suffered mental anguish, humiliation, emotional distress, loss of enjoyment of life, and other non-pecuniary losses, as a result of the attack on Plaintiff, their loved one, because Plaintiff has not been the same wife and mother since that horrific experience.

COUNT ONE
BATTERY

59. Plaintiff incorporates paragraphs 1-84, as if fully set forth herein.

60. Defendants, Officers Tanner and Wyatt's conduct constitutes battery, in that Defendants intentionally caused harmful or offensive contact with Plaintiff without her consent, including touching her, spinning her around, slamming her to the ground, choking her, and applying handcuffs in an excessively harmful manner.

61. Plaintiff did not consent to Defendants' use of force, and Defendants' use of force was excessive and oppressive, and hence not justified under the circumstances.

62. Defendants' conduct caused Plaintiff physical harm, including bruises and other injuries, as well as emotional distress.

63. Plaintiffs are entitled to damages for Defendants' battery, including compensatory damages for physical and emotional harm, loss of consortium to the other Plaintiffs, as well as punitive damages to deter future misconduct by Defendants and others with governmental power who are similarly situated.

COUNT TWO
ASSAULT

64. Plaintiffs re-allege and incorporate by reference paragraphs 1-84, as though fully set forth herein.
65. Officer Tanner, with the intention of causing Plaintiff to fear imminent bodily harm, made several confusing and conflicting verbal commands at the same time as he pulled and pointed his gun at Plaintiff, there causing Plaintiff to be uncertain as to what actions were required of her and placing her in apprehension of imminent harm.
66. Officer Tanner, with the intention of causing Plaintiff to fear imminent bodily harm, approached Plaintiff with his taser un-holstered and pointed directly at her, and attempted to restrain her without informing Plaintiff as to why she was being detained.
67. Officer Tanner, without justification or provocation, spun Plaintiff around, slammed her to the ground, and continued to issue commands in a threatening manner.
68. Plaintiff was in reasonable fear of imminent bodily harm and had no ability to avoid the contact with Officer Tanner.
69. As a direct and proximate result of Officer Tanner's intentional, harmful and offensive actions, Plaintiff suffered injuries and damages, including but not limited to physical pain, emotional distress, and mental anguish.
70. Plaintiffs are entitled to damages for Defendants' assault, including economic and noneconomic damages for physical and emotional harm, loss of consortium to the other Plaintiffs, as well as punitive damages and attorney fees to deter future misconduct by Defendants and others with governmental power who are similarly situated.

COUNT THREE
42 USC § 1983 - CIVIL ACTION FOR DEPRIVATION OF RIGHTS

71. Plaintiffs re-allege and incorporate by reference paragraphs 1-84, as though fully set forth herein.
72. Defendants, Officers Tanner and Wyatt employed by the Sylvania Police Department, acted under the color of state law at all times relevant to this action.
73. Defendants, acting under color of state law, deprived Plaintiff of her constitutional rights as secured by the Fourth Amendment to the United States Constitution, as incorporated into the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, by using excessive force in effecting Plaintiff's unlawful arrest.
74. Defendants, in effecting Plaintiff's unlawful arrest, intentionally, recklessly, or with deliberate indifference to Plaintiff's constitutional rights, used excessive force, including but not limited to, shouting confusing commands, threatening arrest, pointing weapons at her, approaching Plaintiff with an un-holstered taser, attacking her, manhandling her, slamming her to the ground, choking her, and continuing to restrain her even after she implied she was willing to comply but was confused on why.
75. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' unconstitutional conduct, Plaintiffs suffered physical injuries, emotional distress, and other damages including but limited to loss of consortium.
76. Defendants' actions constitute a deprivation of Plaintiff's rights under the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution, and as such, Defendants are liable to Plaintiffs for compensatory damages and other economic and non-economic damages, punitive damages, attorneys' fees, and other costs related to the litigation.

COUNT FOUR
RECKLESS ACTS (NEGLIGENCE)

77. Plaintiffs re-allege and incorporate by reference paragraphs 1-84, as though fully set forth herein.
78. Defendants, officers Tanner and Wyatt acted recklessly when he approached Plaintiff in a manner that was threatening, dominant, confusing, confrontational, and unnecessarily aggressive, and used excessive force in detaining Plaintiff.
79. Specifically, Officer Tanner shouted multiple confusing commands at Plaintiff, did not inform her of the reason for the stop and subsequent arrest, and attempted to restrain her with a weapon without any justification.
80. Officers Tanner and Wyatt's reckless conduct was the direct and proximate cause of Plaintiff's injuries.
81. As a result of Officers Tanner and Wyatt's actions, Plaintiff suffered physical harm, including being slammed to the ground and restrained with excessive force, causing bruises and injuries to her body, and emotional distress.
82. Officers Tanner and Wyatt knew or should have known that Plaintiff was not a threat to their physical wellbeing, and thus any force, let alone the excessive force employed by them, was unnecessary and a violation of Plaintiff's rights.
83. As a direct result of Officers Tanner and Wyatt's recklessness, Plaintiff incurred medical expenses and other damages, including physical pain and suffering, mental anguish, and emotional distress.
84. Plaintiffs are entitled to economic and noneconomic damages, to include and along with compensatory damages, consequential damages, special damages, punitive and/or

exemplary damages, attorney fees, court costs, and interest as a result of the Defendants' reckless conduct.

CONCLUSION

WHEREFORE, Plaintiffs prays for a judgment against Sylvania Police Department and its agents, Officers John Tanner and Michael Wyatt, for a sum in excess of \$30,000,000.00, to include compensatory damages, consequential damages, special damages, all economic or noneconomic damages applicable, punitive and/or exemplary damages, attorney fees, court costs, interest, along with any and all other relief found to be just and proper by this Court or the record as it become apparent.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Anthony J. Richardson, II, Esq.
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VERIFICATION

I, Caitlin Taylor, declare as follows:

- 1. I am a Plaintiff in the present case, a citizen of the United States of America, and a resident of the State of Michigan.
- 2. I have personal knowledge of myself, my activities, my observations, my experiences, including those set out in the foregoing Verified Complaint; and if called on to testify, I would competently testify as to the matters stated herein.
- 4. I verify under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the factual statements in this Verified Complaint concerning myself, my activities, and my experiences are true and correct, as are the factual statements concerning Defendants, Sylvania Township Police Department, and its agents and officers and their activities, and their intentions.

CAITLIN TAYLOR, AS PLAINTIFF

STATE OF OHIO)
)
 COUNTY OF _____) SS:

On this _____ day of _____, 2023, before me, a Notary Public, personally appeared CAITLIN TAYLOR, as Plaintiff and affiant herein, who, after having been duly sworn, deposed and said facts and averments made in the above Verified Complaint are true and accurate as she verily believes, and signed and affixed her name above.

Notary Public

My Commission Expires

PRAECIPE OF SERVICE

TO THE CLERK OF COURTS:

Please issue summons and copies of this Complaint and serve same upon the following parties:

SYLVANIA TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT
4420 King Road
Sylvania Township, Ohio 43560

OFFICER JOHN A. TANNER, JR.
4420 King Road
Sylvania Township, Ohio 43560

OFFICER MICHAEL WYATT
4420 King Road
Sylvania Township, Ohio 43560

/s/ Anthony J. Richardson, II
Anthony J. Richardson II (0097200)
Law Office of Anthony J. Richardson II, LLC