

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA
CASE NO. 0:25-cv-60841-JMS**

NIHAL MICHAEL GAUTAM,
Plaintiff,

v.

**CITY OF SUNRISE, FLORIDA;
OFFICER MAURICE LAWRENCE, in his individual capacity;
SERGEANT BRADFORD JONES, in his individual and supervisory capacities;
LIEUTENANT MICHAEL WEST, in his individual and supervisory capacities;
SERGEANT DELTAMUS CASON, in his individual and supervisory capacities;
OFFICER CARLOS LOPEZ, in his individual capacity;
OFFICER TERRELL BUSH, in his individual capacity;
JOHN DOE SUPERVISORS 1–3, in their individual capacities;**
Defendants.

THIRD AMENDED COMPLAINT

FOR DAMAGES, INJUNCTIVE RELIEF, AND JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

COMES NOW Plaintiff NIHAL MICHAEL GAUTAM, pro se, and respectfully files this Third Amended Complaint against Defendants, and states as follows:

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This case arises out of a March 6, 2025 incident in which the Plaintiff, a private citizen and father, was wrongfully detained, falsely arrested, and subjected to unconstitutional conditions of confinement by officers of the Sunrise Police Department. Despite being peaceful, non-threatening, and fully cooperative, Plaintiff was surrounded by over a dozen officers, cuffed for hours behind his back, denied basic care, and charged through manipulated narratives later dismissed.
2. The misconduct described herein was not an isolated event, but part of an ongoing pattern of abuse and concealment by the City of Sunrise and its police command structure. Plaintiff seeks redress for violations of his constitutional rights and to expose a

broader institutional breakdown.

3. This includes willful misconduct by high-ranking officials previously implicated in other acts of unconstitutional behavior. **Lieutenant Michael West**, for example, was listed in a 2013 media report documenting Sunrise Police's role in controversial and racially discriminatory forfeiture operations. Despite that negative publicity and audit findings, West remained in command, was promoted, and ultimately played a supervisory role in Plaintiff's wrongful arrest. His continued presence reflects the City of Sunrise's deliberate indifference to prior notice of misconduct, satisfying the requirements for Monell liability under **Monell v. Dept. of Social Servs., 436 U.S. 658 (1978)**.

II. JURISDICTION AND VENUE

4. This Court has jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. §1331 and 42 U.S.C. §1983.
5. Venue is proper under 28 U.S.C. §1391(b) because the events occurred in Broward County, Florida.

III. PARTIES

6. Plaintiff **Nihal Michael Gautam** is a resident of Florida, currently residing out of state. He is a father, business owner, and licensed insurance agent.
7. Defendant **City of Sunrise** is a Florida municipality responsible for oversight of the Sunrise Police Department.
8. Defendant **Officer Maurice Lawrence** is a Sunrise Police Department officer who participated in Plaintiff's arrest and transport.
9. Defendant **Sergeant Bradford Jones** is a Sunrise Police Department sergeant who was present throughout the incident but omitted from official records.
10. Defendant **Lieutenant Michael West** is a Sunrise Police Department lieutenant who acted as a scene commander during the incident and had previously been publicly named in connection with unconstitutional forfeiture practices.

11. Defendant **Sergeant Deltamus Cason** is a Sunrise Police Department sergeant and the senior officer on scene during Plaintiff's arrest.
 12. Defendant **Officer Carlos Lopez** is a Sunrise Police Department officer who participated in the incident.
 13. Defendant **Officer Terrell Bush** is a Sunrise Police Department officer who participated in the incident.
 14. Defendants **John Doe Supervisors 1–3** are supervisory personnel whose identities are presently unknown but who approved or facilitated the misconduct.
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IV. FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

15. On March 6, 2025, at approximately 2:20 a.m., Plaintiff was leaving his son's mother's residence following a verbal dispute. Plaintiff was unarmed, calm, and accompanied only by his two trained golden retrievers. Multiple officers — including Officers Maurice Lawrence, Carlos Lopez, Terrell Bush, Sgt. Deltamus Cason, Lt. Michael West, Officer Rachel Howe, and ghost supervisor Sgt. Bradford Jones — converged on the scene with an aggressive display of force, using at least five vehicles including both marked units and unmarked "ghost" units.
16. Plaintiff's one-year-old child was inside the residence asleep. Despite the presence of a minor, officers showed no concern for the child's safety or well-being. Officers repeatedly entered and exited the residence, questioning the alleged victim and creating instability.
17. At approximately 3:00 a.m., Plaintiff was handcuffed behind his back by Officer Lawrence. Plaintiff immediately complained that the cuffs were painfully tight, stating on body-worn camera, "These cuffs are too tight, please loosen them," and "I can't feel my hands." These pleas were ignored by Lawrence, Bush, Lopez, and West.
18. Plaintiff was placed in a patrol car at 3:03 a.m. and left there for over two hours. During this time he repeatedly requested water, bathroom access, and relief from the cuffs. Lawrence's dash-mounted BWC captured Plaintiff begging for assistance while officers — including Lawrence, West, Bush, and Jones — openly mocked him and discussed ways to escalate charges to a felony. Jones, though omitted from all paperwork, is seen riding with Lawrence from the arrest scene to Sunrise Jail and then to Broward Main Jail.
19. Officers failed to provide Miranda warnings. Plaintiff was never clearly informed of the charges or given access to counsel. His property, including his dogs and personal effects, was taken without receipts or documentation, violating chain-of-custody

procedures. When Plaintiff asked about his dogs' safety, officers responded dismissively or sarcastically.

20. Body-worn camera evidence shows a consistent pattern of suppression. Howe's camera is the only one that runs continuously. In contrast, Lawrence, Bush, and West repeatedly muted their audio during incriminating discussions. West's body cam cut off when he approached Cason at 2:55 a.m. and did not resume until minutes later. Officers Bush, Jones, and Lawrence appear together in an elevator at 2:31 a.m. despite CAD logs showing Bush had left the scene at that time. The footage then abruptly cuts to the victim giving a statement, with no continuity. These inconsistencies strongly suggest manipulation or alteration of BWC evidence.
21. Plaintiff has identified at least a dozen muting events across the BWC files of Lawrence, Bush, and West. These occur exactly when officers confer about what charges to apply, when West meets with Cason, when Jones issues instructions, and when Plaintiff begs for relief. This is consistent with a deliberate strategy to suppress exculpatory evidence.
22. The unlawful detention and tampering caused severe harm. Plaintiff suffered emotional distress, panic, and physical injury from the tight restraints. He lost professional opportunities and housing stability, including insurance carrier contracts with Cigna and UnitedHealthcare, due to reputational damage and the false arrest record. The arrest paperwork itself listed only Officer Maurice Lawrence as the arresting officer, omitted any mention of supervising personnel such as West, Cason, or Jones, and contained no victim statement or clear explanation of charges. Plaintiff's name was simply paired with a generic 'battery' charge, without supporting evidence, probable cause narrative, or corroborating documentation. This barebones paperwork violated Florida statutory requirements for sworn arrest affidavits, which mandate a probable cause narrative and supporting witness information under Fla. R. Crim. P. 3.121. It also violated Plaintiff's Fourteenth Amendment due process rights by detaining and prosecuting him without adequate notice of the charges or factual basis. The absence of a victim statement is particularly significant, because the alleged victim's later recorded statement did not match the listed charge, further proving that the battery allegation was manufactured and unsupported.
23. The charges were ultimately dismissed on May 22, 2025, in Broward County Court Case No. [insert case number], confirming the lack of probable cause. The paperwork deficiencies carried over into criminal discovery: Jones and Cason were omitted entirely despite appearing on CAD logs and body camera evidence, and the State relied almost exclusively on the defective affidavit listing only Lawrence. Only after a motion to compel did the prosecution produce partial BWC footage, revealing further contradictions between CAD times and video sequences. The alleged victim's later BWC-recorded statement did not allege a biting battery as charged, further undermining the paperwork's accuracy. These combined failures violated Brady and Giglio obligations by denying Plaintiff access to exculpatory and impeachment evidence. Plaintiff's experience mirrors

the systemic culture of abuse and concealment within Sunrise PD, consistent with prior incidents such as the 2021 Pullease–Mata assault and longstanding DOJ audit findings. The repeated muting, omissions of ghost supervisors, falsified records, and discovery suppression show systemic misconduct, not isolated negligence.

24. CAD logs confirm that Officer Bush left the scene at approximately 2:28 a.m. and did not reappear until 2:48 a.m. Yet body camera footage depicts Bush in an elevator with Lawrence and Jones at 2:31 a.m. This impossible overlap underscores that the BWC timeline was altered or spliced.
25. Similarly, Sgt. Deltamus Cason is logged as present until nearly 6:00 a.m., but no body camera footage has ever been produced for him despite his senior supervisory role. The absence of his BWC, combined with his documented presence, shows deliberate omission of critical evidence.
26. During Plaintiff's detention in the patrol car, audio captures officers laughing and mocking Plaintiff's pleas. In one critical exchange immediately after Plaintiff was cuffed around 3:03 a.m., Officer Lopez questioned why Plaintiff was even being arrested and asked Officer Bush if anything had changed. Bush responded, "She said he bit her." Lopez expressed disbelief, asking, "Can you even see a mark?" Bush hesitated and admitted, "Ehh, it's a little red." Lopez then stated, "That's some weak PC." Realizing this incriminating conversation was being recorded, Bush tapped Lopez on his body-worn camera and stated, "TAC debrief." At that moment, both officers' cameras cut off. This sequence, captured across multiple devices, shows not only that officers themselves doubted the validity of the arrest but that they intentionally suppressed exculpatory evidence to cover it up.
27. Officers' disregard extended to Plaintiff's child and pets. Plaintiff's one-year-old son remained inside during the prolonged incident without support or comfort. Plaintiff's two dogs were seized without any receipts or chain-of-custody paperwork. Officers refused to confirm their whereabouts, further exacerbating Plaintiff's distress.
28. The charges against Plaintiff were formally dismissed on May 22, 2025, in Broward County Court Case No. [insert case number], as reflected on the state docket. The dismissal order confirms that the arrest lacked probable cause and that continued prosecution was untenable once suppressed evidence began to surface.
29. The use of the phrase "TAC debrief" by Officer Bush to signal camera muting demonstrates a broader Sunrise PD practice. This was not an isolated act but a code understood among officers to cut or mute body cameras when sensitive or incriminating conversations occurred. The existence of such a code proves an unofficial policy or custom of suppression within the department, mirroring the Pullease–Mata cover-up

where officers muted cameras on command.

30. These practices — muting BWCs during incriminating conversations, omitting ghost supervisors from official reports, failing to provide required footage, altering timelines, seizing property without documentation, and producing internally inconsistent records — align directly with Sunrise PD's prior misconduct, including the Pullease–Mata incident of 2021 and the 2014 DOJ audit findings. In each instance, the City tolerated suppression of evidence and shielded abusive supervisors rather than correcting misconduct. Collectively, these actions prejudiced Plaintiff's defense by denying him the ability to confront supervisory decisionmakers such as Jones and Cason, violating his Sixth and Fourteenth Amendment rights.
31. The misconduct Plaintiff endured on March 6, 2025 was not an isolated aberration but part of a **longstanding, documented pattern** of unlawful practices, concealment, and failure to discipline within the Sunrise Police Department.
32. In November 2021, Sunrise Police Sergeant **Christopher Pullease** escalated a routine arrest by pointing pepper spray at a fully handcuffed suspect sitting in a patrol car. The suspect was compliant and posed no immediate threat.
33. When Officer **Amanda Mata** attempted to intervene, fulfilling her duty to prevent excessive force, Pullease spun around and **grabbed her by the throat**, shoving her against a cruiser in full view of multiple officers.
34. Pullease then ordered officers on scene to **turn off their body-worn cameras**, a deliberate suppression of evidence that mirrors the BWC muting code used during Plaintiff's own arrest.
35. In January 2022, Sunrise PD's chief publicly called the video of Pullease "disgusting," yet the department had allowed him to remain in a supervisory role for over two decades, despite **at least two prior Internal Affairs complaints for excessive force that Sunrise cleared without discipline**.
36. Prosecutors later criminally charged Pullease with **battery on a law enforcement officer, assault on the suspect, and evidence tampering**.
37. The Pullease case exemplifies Sunrise's **custom of shielding supervisors, suppressing body-camera evidence, and retaliating against subordinates who intervene**. Mata's identity was blurred in media and official disclosures, further demonstrating a pattern of discouraging whistleblowing and protecting abusive superiors.
38. In 2014, the **U.S. Department of Justice Inspector General audited Sunrise PD's equitable sharing (forfeiture) program**.

39. The audit found Sunrise unlawfully paid **\$374,257 from asset forfeiture accounts to a private law firm**, a use expressly prohibited under federal rules.
40. The audit further identified **weak internal controls, poor financial oversight, and lack of accountability** in the department's handling of forfeiture funds.
41. Media coverage reported that Sunrise PD's forfeiture stings disproportionately targeted **Black and Latino out-of-state drivers** along I-95, confirming racial disparities.
42. Defendant **Lt. Michael West**, named in this Complaint, was publicly associated with these forfeiture operations. Despite DOJ findings, the City promoted West and continued to entrust him with command authority.
43. This proves the City had federal notice of unconstitutional and unlawful practices, yet acted with **deliberate indifference by rewarding, not disciplining, involved supervisors**.
44. In 2005, Sunrise PD's SWAT team raided the home of **23-year-old Anthony Diotaiuto** in a pre-dawn drug operation.
45. Officers fired **10 rounds, killing Diotaiuto** in his own bedroom.
46. Diotaiuto was a bartender and part-time student with no serious record; he legally possessed firearms and held a concealed-carry permit.
47. Sunrise PD initially claimed he pointed a gun at officers. When pressed, the department shifted its story, later saying a gun was merely found "next to the body."
48. Neighbors contradicted Sunrise PD's account, stating they heard **no announcement** before entry.
49. The family filed a federal lawsuit alleging wrongful death and unconstitutional tactics. The suit was dismissed on qualified immunity grounds, not on the merits, illustrating how Sunrise avoided accountability despite grave misconduct.
50. The Diotaiuto raid highlights Sunrise PD's entrenched use of **paramilitary SWAT tactics, contradictory official narratives, and lack of meaningful discipline**.
51. In March 2019, **16-year-old Damain Martin** drowned in a canal following a Sunrise PD foot pursuit.
52. Witnesses reported a Sunrise officer **fired a Taser at Martin as he approached the water**, incapacitating him.

53. Autopsy findings revealed wounds consistent with a Taser strike on Martin's arm, yet Sunrise denied any proof of contact.
54. Audio captured Martin pleading for help before drowning while multiple officers stood by.
55. Sunrise PD's Internal Affairs later concluded the officers made the "indisputably correct" decision not to enter the water, a conclusion that demonstrates **institutional indifference to the preservation of life**.
56. Civil rights attorney **Ben Crump**, representing Martin's mother, filed suit against Sunrise PD alleging failure to train officers in rescue techniques and tolerance of dangerous Taser use near water.
57. Though dismissed at summary judgment, the case shows Sunrise PD's custom of **choosing liability avoidance over life-saving duty**.
58. In July 2020, **22-year-old Tyler Harper** was ambushed and brutally beaten by five attackers in Sunrise while her three-year-old son watched.
59. Cell phone video captured the attack. Harper immediately named all five assailants to responding Sunrise officers, signed an affidavit, and provided addresses.
60. Despite overwhelming evidence, Sunrise PD took no action, later claiming "insufficient evidence."
61. Two days later, Harper died by suicide, which her family linked directly to Sunrise PD's refusal to protect her.
62. A federal lawsuit alleged Sunrise PD's **flagrant disregard to investigate violent felonies** reflects a custom of indifference to victims, especially women.
63. Officers even initially **handcuffed Harper herself** while she was bloodied and injured, mistaking the victim for a perpetrator, further demonstrating incompetence and bias.
64. In 2023, Sunrise Sergeant **Daniel Rodriguez** reported that Internal Affairs commander **Lt. Brian Katz** removed an antique fire alarm bell from a crime scene and mounted it as a "trophy" in the police station.
65. Rather than disciplining Katz, Sunrise PD retaliated against Rodriguez, eventually arresting him on allegations of "written threats" against Katz.
66. Prosecutors dismissed the charges, finding them unsupported, but Sunrise terminated Rodriguez.

67. Katz, by contrast, received only **“verbal counseling.”**
68. This demonstrates a Sunrise custom of **protecting supervisors engaged in misconduct while retaliating against whistleblowers**, flipping accountability upside-down.
69. Sunrise PD has also developed a pattern of obstructing transparency.
70. In 2014, when the ACLU requested records on Stingray cell-site simulator devices, Sunrise PD issued a “Glomar” response — refusing to confirm or deny records existed.
71. This tactic, borrowed from federal intelligence agencies, has no basis in Florida’s Sunshine Law (Fla. Stat. §119.07) and constituted a blatant violation.
72. The ACLU noted Sunrise’s response was especially absurd given the City had already posted documents online confirming Stingray use.
73. Plaintiff’s own public records experience mirrors this obstruction.
74. In April 2025, Sunrise denied that “Officer Demacus Lawrence” existed, despite his confirmed role in Plaintiff’s arrest.
75. The City demanded an upfront payment of **\$11,241.90** to process other records, citing a fabricated 25% “pension surcharge.”
76. Sunrise also falsely denied the existence of its Special Emergency Response Team (SERT), contradicting Plaintiff’s CAD evidence.
77. These experiences, consistent with Sunrise’s 2014 ACLU incident, demonstrate a **custom of suppressing public records to shield misconduct from exposure.**
78. Collectively, these incidents — the Pullease cover-up, DOJ audit, SWAT raid, Martin drowning, Harper beating, Katz retaliation, and systemic public records obstruction — establish a **pattern and practice of unconstitutional conduct.**
79. Each of these incidents was **highly publicized, well-documented, and placed the City on clear notice** of systemic problems.
80. Rather than reform, the City consistently rewarded supervisors such as West, Katz, and Pullease, while punishing truth-tellers like Mata and Rodriguez.
81. Under Monell, this establishes **deliberate indifference** by the City of Sunrise to the constitutional rights of its residents.

82. The pattern of abuse in Sunrise PD also connects to broader systemic failures in Broward County. Plaintiff's best friend, **Kevin Desir**, died in 2021 while in custody at North Broward Jail during a mental health crisis. Kevin was restrained in a chair and suffered fatal injuries under the watch of law enforcement and jail staff.
83. Kevin's death, like the drowning of Damain Martin, highlights a **recurring pattern of law enforcement in Sunrise and Broward showing deliberate indifference to the lives of vulnerable citizens** — particularly young Black men in custody.
84. Plaintiff's arrest on March 6, 2025 occurred against this backdrop of community trauma. The knowledge that his best friend had been killed in custody heightened Plaintiff's fear, panic, and emotional injury when he was surrounded by Sunrise officers using the same playbook of indifference, suppression, and excessive force.
85. Amid this pattern of abuse, it is important to note that a small number of Sunrise officers demonstrated courage and integrity by attempting to uphold the Constitution.
86. Officer **Rachel Howe**, present at Plaintiff's March 6 arrest, kept her body-worn camera running continuously and acted with restraint, preserving the record when others muted or cut their devices.
87. Likewise, Officer **Amanda Mata**, in the Pullease incident, physically intervened to stop excessive force against a suspect — only to be choked and assaulted by her superior.
88. These two officers embody the **proper constitutional standard** of policing: intervention, restraint, and transparency. Yet Sunrise PD's response to each was to minimize, blur, and suppress their role while protecting abusive supervisors.
89. The contrast underscores Plaintiff's Monell claim: Sunrise PD's policies, customs, and supervisory culture **punish righteous officers who protect civil rights and reward those who violate them**.
90. Plaintiff's own arrest on March 6, 2025, is the predictable outcome of the City's longstanding failure to train, supervise, and discipline its officers.

V. HARM TO PLAINTIFF

91. As a direct and proximate result of the unlawful arrest, evidence suppression, pension-based command scheme, and public records obstruction described in this Complaint, Plaintiff suffered and continues to suffer severe, life-altering harm.
92. This harm is not abstract or speculative. It is quantifiable, immediate, and documented across Plaintiff's professional, financial, emotional, and familial life. The full weight of Sunrise PD's systemic misconduct fell upon Plaintiff in the following ways.

93. Plaintiff is the licensed owner and operator of a multi-state insurance brokerage known as Sunny Benefits.
94. At the time of his arrest, Plaintiff was onboarding with multiple national carriers and executing contracts with major healthcare providers.
95. As a direct result of the false arrest and extended detainment, Plaintiff lost key accounts and partnerships with Cigna and UnitedHealthcare — carriers with whom he had longstanding, high-value relationships.
96. The loss of these contracts directly reduced Plaintiff's monthly income, damaged his reputation in the insurance industry, and threatened the long-term viability of his agency.
97. Plaintiff's business bank accounts, digital tools, and office devices were also frozen, locked, or delayed due to the fraudulent arrest record, creating a cascading shutdown of operations across multiple states.
98. Plaintiff was evicted from his residence after missing rent while jailed and fighting retaliatory charges stemming from the March 6, 2025 arrest.
99. The instability caused by this event separated Plaintiff from his one-year-old son, Leo, for over two months.
100. Plaintiff's ability to provide consistent parenting, emotional support, and financial stability for Leo has been severely compromised.
101. Despite committing no crime and never being found guilty of any offense, Plaintiff has endured systemic punishments normally reserved for convicted felons — without recourse, protection, or restoration of dignity.
102. The trauma of being detained in front of his infant son, handcuffed so tightly that his wrists swelled, and mocked by uniformed officers while locked in a hot patrol vehicle for over two hours has caused Plaintiff lasting psychological damage.
103. Plaintiff's trauma was magnified by the memory of his best friend, Kevin Desir, who died in Broward County custody under similar negligent conditions.
104. During his detention, Plaintiff overheard officers laughing, joking about "upping the charges," and dismissing his pleas for relief. These experiences triggered panic, dread, and a profound sense of spiritual violation.
105. Since the incident, Plaintiff has suffered symptoms of PTSD, anxiety, disrupted sleep, and hypervigilance, especially around law enforcement personnel and vehicles.

106. Plaintiff has been forced to spend multiple nights on the street with his dogs, scrambling for shelter and food while navigating litigation and fatherhood.
107. Plaintiff's arrest records — though tied to charges dismissed or reduced — continue to circulate in databases, branding him as a threat during employment and housing screenings.
108. Plaintiff was denied full access to discovery until a court compelled it and was repeatedly told that key officers "did not exist," a blatant obstruction of his constitutional right to due process.
109. Officers who participated in the cover-up, including West, Cason, and Jones, remain unaccountable and continue to benefit from pensions and shielded identities.
110. Redactions, denials, and delays in public records have made Plaintiff's pursuit of justice a logistical nightmare — obstructed by gatekeeping designed to exhaust and defeat him.
111. Beyond material damages, Plaintiff has endured profound existential pain. He rebuilt his life and founded Sunny Benefits after surviving personal and financial collapse.
112. Kevin Desir was a guiding force in that rebuilding — a friend, mentor, and protector. Kevin's death in custody was already an open wound; Plaintiff's arrest tore it open anew.
113. The moment Plaintiff was placed in the patrol car, ignored, mocked, and denied basic care, he felt the system attempting to do to him what it had done to Kevin.
114. Plaintiff survived — but he now walks with a mission to expose the mechanisms that nearly erased him and already erased his friend.
115. Plaintiff brings this lawsuit not only to recover damages but to create a permanent record: to document what was done, to warn others, and to demand that no other child be left alone while their parent is cuffed outside in the cold.
116. No more ghosts. No more redactions.

COUNT I – 42 U.S.C. § 1983: False Arrest and Unlawful Seizure

(Against All Defendant Officers and the City of Sunrise)

117. Under 42 U.S.C. § 1983, individuals have the right to be free from unreasonable searches and seizures as guaranteed by the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments.
 118. On March 6, 2025, Plaintiff was arrested without a warrant and without probable cause.
 119. Body-worn camera footage and officer statements show Officer Carlos Lopez questioning the basis for the arrest, stating, “That’s lowkey some weak-ass PC.”
 120. Officer Bush admitted the alleged “bite mark” was only “a little red” and showed no imprint.
 121. Despite these admissions, Plaintiff was handcuffed, denied Miranda warnings, and detained for over two hours without lawful justification.
 122. Supervisors West, Cason, and Jones — none listed in paperwork — oversaw the arrest while remaining undocumented and unaccountable.
 123. The arrest affidavit lacked any probable cause narrative or victim statement, in violation of Fla. R. Crim. P. 3.121 and Plaintiff’s due process rights.
 124. Plaintiff seeks compensatory damages for deprivation of liberty, emotional distress, reputational harm, and business loss, and a declaratory judgment that his arrest violated the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments.
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COUNT II – 42 U.S.C. § 1983: Excessive Force and Inhumane Conditions

(Against All Defendant Officers and the City of Sunrise)

125. The Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments protect individuals from excessive force and inhumane conditions of confinement.
 126. Plaintiff was handcuffed tightly behind his back, immediately complained of severe pain and circulation loss, and begged officers to loosen the cuffs.
 127. These pleas were ignored by Officers Lawrence, Bush, and West, despite repeated requests captured on BWC.
 128. Plaintiff was locked in a patrol car from 3:03 AM onward without water, bathroom access, or medical care.
 129. Officers mocked Plaintiff's pain, laughed nearby, and discussed escalating charges.
 130. Officer Bush eventually loosened the cuffs nearly an hour later, dismissing Plaintiff's prior requests.
 131. No use-of-force report was filed, despite visible injury.
 132. Courts in the Eleventh Circuit and beyond have held that ignoring detainee complaints of painfully tight handcuffs constitutes excessive force (*see Hadley v. Gutierrez*).
 133. Plaintiff seeks compensatory and punitive damages for physical injury, psychological trauma, and inhumane treatment, and injunctive relief mandating detainee-care training and BWC accountability.
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COUNT III – 42 U.S.C. § 1983: Failure to Intervene

(Against All Defendant Officers Individually)

134. An officer who witnesses a constitutional violation and has a realistic opportunity to stop it but fails to do so may be held liable under §1983.
 135. On March 6, 2025, Plaintiff was visibly suffering while restrained and begging for relief.
 136. Officers Bush, Lopez, Lawrence, West, Jones, and Cason were within feet of Plaintiff and saw his deteriorating condition.
 137. Officer Lopez openly questioned probable cause but failed to intervene.
 138. Supervisors West, Jones, and Cason exercised control but did nothing, even as they muted BWCs and conferred off-record.
 139. Sunrise had prior notice of intervention duties from the Pullease–Mata assault, where an officer was choked for intervening. Despite this, no officer intervened to stop Plaintiff's mistreatment.
 140. Plaintiff seeks compensatory and punitive damages for Defendants' deliberate indifference in failing to intervene.
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COUNT IV – 42 U.S.C. § 1983: Monell Municipal Liability

(Against Defendant City of Sunrise)

141. Under *Monell v. Department of Social Services*, municipalities are liable where constitutional violations result from policies, customs, or deliberate indifference by policymakers.

142. Sunrise PD operated under a pattern of misconduct, including:

- Use of ghost officers (Jones, Cason) not listed in paperwork;
- Deployment of “retired” officers like West in active field command;
- Routine muting of BWCs to suppress incriminating conversations;
- Falsified or incomplete arrest affidavits;
- Retaliation against whistleblowers (Mata, Rodriguez);
- Pension/DROP manipulation to reward silence and shield abusers.

143. These customs were well-documented in prior incidents: Pullease–Mata assault, DOJ audit (2014), Diotaiuto SWAT raid, Martin drowning, Harper beating, Katz whistleblower retaliation, and multiple obstructed PRRs.

144. Policymakers ratified misconduct by promoting supervisors like West despite federal audit findings, permitting Pullease to retire under investigation with benefits, and retaliating against officers who intervened.

145. Plaintiff’s March 6, 2025 arrest — involving ghost supervisors, muted BWCs, fabricated charges, and obstructed discovery — was a foreseeable product of these customs and failures.

146. Plaintiff seeks declaratory judgment holding the City liable under *Monell*, compensatory damages for institutional failures, and injunctive relief mandating federal oversight, pension audits, and structural reform.

COUNT V – Injunctive and Declaratory Relief

(Against All Defendants)

147. Plaintiff seeks equitable relief under 28 U.S.C. §§ 2201–2202 and Fed. R. Civ. P. 65 to prevent ongoing constitutional violations and protect public interest.

148. Defendants' conduct reflects a continuing municipal pattern involving:

- False arrests without probable cause;
- Suppression and muting of BWCs;
- Ghost supervision by unlisted officers;
- Retaliation against whistleblowers;
- Abuse of pension and DROP structures;
- Public records obstruction.

149. Plaintiff requests the Court:

(a) Declare that Defendants violated his rights under the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments and 42 U.S.C. §1983;

(b) Enjoin Defendants from using ghost supervisors, muting BWCs, or obstructing records;

(c) Mandate forensic audits of BWC chain-of-custody logs, pension records, and DROP accounts;

(d) Bar “retired under investigation” officers from command or pension board roles;

(e) Require transparency measures, including public IA logs and deployment rosters;

(f) Preserve all BWC, CAD, and property records relevant to Plaintiff's claims.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff **Nihal Michael Gautam** respectfully requests that this Court enter judgment in his favor and against all Defendants, jointly and severally, and award the following relief:

150. **Compensatory Damages** in an amount to be determined at trial, but not less than **\$500,000,000**, for loss of liberty, emotional distress, reputational harm, loss of business, separation from family, and destruction of housing stability.

151. **Punitive Damages** against individual Defendants whose conduct was malicious, retaliatory, or grossly indifferent to Plaintiff's constitutional rights.

152. **Treble Damages** to the extent available under **18 U.S.C. §1964(c)**, based on Defendants' racketeering acts including obstruction of justice, pension manipulation, and evidence suppression.
153. **Declaratory Relief** declaring that Defendants' conduct violated Plaintiff's rights under the **Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments** and 42 U.S.C. §1983.
154. **Injunctive Relief**, including but not limited to:
- (a) Federal oversight of Sunrise PD operations, with mandatory audits of body-worn camera systems, metadata, and chain-of-custody logs;
 - (b) Independent forensic audits of **all pension and DROP records from 2010–present**;
 - (c) Removal and permanent disqualification of any "retired under investigation" officer from supervisory, advisory, or pension board roles;
 - (d) Adoption of a Sunshine Compliance Policy requiring **real-time public tracking of IA complaints, officer deployments, retirements, and reappointments**;
 - (e) Prohibition of ghost supervisors or unlisted officers in any field operation without full documentation;
 - (f) Court-ordered preservation of all BWC, CAD, arrest paperwork, and property records relevant to Plaintiff's claims.
155. **Litigation Costs and Fees** pursuant to **42 U.S.C. §1988, 18 U.S.C. §1964(c)**, and all applicable law, including costs of litigation, expert witness fees, and attorney's fees if Plaintiff later retains counsel.
156. **Such Other Relief** as this Court deems just, proper, and necessary to ensure accountability, transparency, and protection of civil rights within the City of Sunrise and beyond.
157. **Respectfully submitted,**

Dated: August 26, 2025

/s/ Nihal Michael Gautam

Nihal Michael Gautam, Pro Se Plaintiff

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