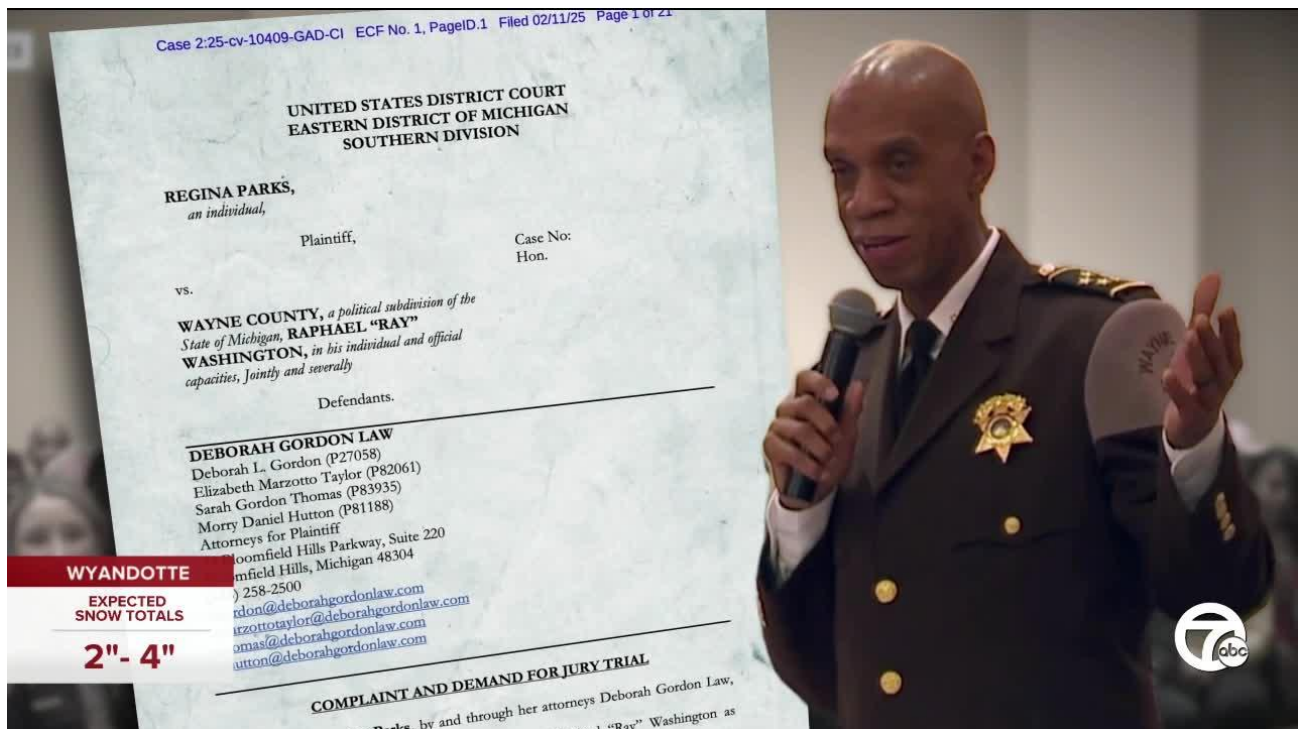


Wayne County Sheriff Raphael Washington accused again of sexual harassment

A lawsuit filed Tuesday represents at least the fifth harassment claim made against Washington during his law enforcement career

In a lawsuit filed Tuesday, Wayne County Sheriff Raphael Washington was accused by a former employee of serial sexual harassment, claiming she was fired after reporting his unwanted touching, lewd comments, sexual propositions and sharing of a pornographic video.



By: [Ross Jones](#)

Posted 8:00 PM, Feb 11, 2025

and last updated 11:17 PM, Feb 11, 2025

(WXYZ) — In a lawsuit filed Tuesday, Wayne County Sheriff Raphael Washington was accused by a former employee of serial sexual harassment, claiming she was fired after reporting his unwanted touching, lewd comments, sexual propositions and sharing of a pornographic video.

The accuser, Regina Parks, spent six years working for the sheriff's office, spending most of her time as a community outreach director. She says she was fired in November 2024.

"The actions, when you put them all together, are shocking for a high-level elected official who should be setting a standard for everybody that works under him," said attorney Deb Gordon, who represents Parks.

In the 21-page complaint, Parks says she was "subjected to sexual harassment on a routine basis, accusing Washington of touching or striking her buttocks, rubbing and touching her stomach and thighs over and under her clothing, and repeatedly making lewd and sexual comments about her appearance.

Reached Tuesday evening, a spokeswoman for Sheriff Washington did not immediately have a comment on the claims.

"In what is a typical legal stunt, this lawsuit was apparently filed at the end of business today," said spokeswoman Mara MacDonald. "We have not been served nor had the opportunity for a legal review. When the review is complete, there will be plenty to say."

RELATED: [Wayne County Sheriff Raphael Washington ducks questions over harassment claims](#)

On the evening of February 21, 2023, according to the complaint, Washington called Parks on her cell phone.

“He said—I won’t use his exact language—but that he wanted to have sex with her,” Gordon told Channel 7’s Ross Jones. “And that was kind of scary to her, along with everything else.”

The next day, she says the sheriff called her again. This time, according to the complaint, Washington said he’d just sent staff home due to bad weather, but wanted her to come into the office.

After that, Parks says she reported Washington’s conduct to the sheriff’s chief of staff.

The following week, the lawsuit alleges, Washington called Parks into his office where he rubbed her thighs, hugged her and kissed her on the lips.

In her lawsuit, Parks says she secretly “recorded her conversation with Washington,” saying it implicated him in sexual misconduct.

Months later, in October 2023, Parks said she attended a film premiere with county officials that included Washington. In the movie theater, she says, Washington showed her video on his cell phone “of a woman performing oral sex on him.”

“She was very upset about it and she told him it was extremely inappropriate,” Gordon said. “At which point he said something along the lines of: ‘Well, you’ve got to share the love.’”

In November 2024, according to the complaint, Washington learned that Parks had secretly recorded him. That triggered a meeting with his chief

of staff, according to Gordon, that led to her demise. Parks was fired from her role.

The lawsuit makes reference to a "female executive" who said Washington sexually harassed her too, saying Washington repeatedly referred to the woman as "'Baby' or 'Babe', asked her to stay in his hotel room several times, and requested that she wear certain articles of clothing that he found sexually attractive, among other behaviors."

The federal lawsuit filed Tuesday in Michigan's Eastern District represents at least the fifth time a woman has accused Washington of harassment throughout his law enforcement career.

In 2016, a female sheriff's employee filed suit against Washington, saying he repeatedly asked her for massages at work.

The county settled the case, and an unrelated claim against another sheriff's employee, admitting no wrongdoing and paying \$85,000. Washington denied the allegations.

In 2009, Washington was accused of persistently asking a female sheriff's employee out on a date during an off-site party, even though he knew she was married.

The woman would later withdraw the complaint, saying it was no longer necessary, but standing by her allegations. She continued working for the sheriff.

The year before that, while working for the Detroit Police, a female colleague said Washington commented on her skirt, repeatedly told her

she looked good and placed his hand on her leg, moving it up to her thigh.

She said Washington asked to see her panties and asked her to bend over. Washington denied everything, and an internal affairs investigation did not sustain the allegations made against him.

Washington denied all of the claims against him, insisting that they never happened.

The earliest documented complaint against Washington happened in December 2002 in a Southfield neighborhood just before midnight. Unlike the prior complaints, this one involved a former member of Washington's family.

According to an internal affairs investigation, Southfield Police were called to a home on Avon Street at 11:16 PM after a neighbor called 911. He said he saw a man "acting suspiciously in the neighborhood."

When police responded, they found Washington wearing a "Detroit Police Department jacket, black pants, black knit cap and black shoes."

He told officers he was there on a jog but wasn't wearing jogging clothes.

Southfield police "felt...Washington was lying," according to the investigation, and called in a K-9 unit who tracked his scent to the back entrance a home where they also found a fresh footprint in the snow.

That home belonged to Washington's ex-wife.

She would accuse him of “peeping in the windows,” according to the investigation, and told police she wanted to pursue criminal and departmental charges.

She said after the incident happened, Washington was “abusive, screaming at her and cursing.” But later on, after agreeing to give a statement to internal affairs, she never showed up for her interview.

Washington was charged internally with conduct unbecoming an officer and making a false statement. But when the case was referred for discipline, he was found not guilty. No reason was documented.

In 2022, when 7 News Detroit reported on Washington’s prior history of misconduct allegations, his campaign for sheriff dismissed the allegations as part of the political season, saying the campaign “does not respond to rumor and innuendo tossed about in a heated campaign season - particularly after they have been investigated by impartial parties as far back as nearly two decades ago, concluding there was never any cause for any actions to be taken.”

Contact 7 Investigator Ross Jones at ross.jones@wxyz.com or at (248) 827-9466.