



# L.A. police union files lawsuit demanding takedown of 'killer cop' website

Nathaniel Percy and Hanna Lykke

PUBLISHED: March 24, 2023 at 7:28 p.m. | UPDATED: March 24, 2023 at 9:08 p.m.

Crime and Public Safety, News

Three LAPD officers and their union, the Los Angeles Police Protective League, have filed a lawsuit aimed at taking down a website and Twitter account titled “Killer Cop” due to concerns its content incites violence against officers, the union announced Friday, March 24.

The lawsuit names Steven Sutcliffe as the defendant and alleges he has inflicted “intentional” emotional distress and endangered LAPD officers’ safety on his KillerCop.com site and Twitter account. The suit claims Sutcliffe downloaded sensitive information received by the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition and posted it on Twitter, and makes mention of several other tweets listing apparent bounties for the killing of officers.

“He (Sutcliffe) essentially put a bounty on the lives of police officers. My clients, they go to bed at night and they’re in fear for their safety,” the plaintiffs’ attorney Jacob Kalinski said. “It is the goal of this lawsuit to have Mr. Sutcliffe’s threats removed from Twitter or from wherever else so that there are no individuals out there who act upon (his) promise to pay people essentially to kill police officers.”

Sutcliffe's account has also been reported to Twitter by Kalinski, who said he had not received a "substantive response" from the social media company as of Friday afternoon.

The lawsuit also seeks damages in excess of \$25,000, as well as relief for attorneys' fees and costs associated with a trial.

In a Friday interview, the Los Angeles-based Sutcliffe, 61, said he does not wish for anyone to harm police officers and is not advocating for violence on his website and Twitter account. Sutcliffe, who described himself as an actor and publisher, said his content does not pose a real-life risk to police officers and is protected by the First Amendment.



The lawsuit, Sutcliffe claimed, is an attempt at "viewpoint censorship" that began when the site was first published in 1998. He also claimed he is a victim of retaliation for previously filing an internal affairs complaint against the LAPD.

“You find a viewpoint that you don’t like and you go after them, and you silence them, and you use whatever resources you can find — as much as you can find,” Sutcliffe said. “They don’t like the story and they’ll do whatever they can to get that website down and attack me — that has hurt me financially, emotionally, physically.”

When asked about the officers’ concerns for safety, Sutcliffe said they could “turn off their computer” if they are concerned about his material.

Posting about “rewards” for cops is intended to satirize police departments who seek fugitives, Sutcliffe said. As for the website, it is intended to shed light on alleged mistreatment by the LAPD, Sutcliffe said. He alleged that he was “kidnapped” for filing an internal affairs complaint against an LAPD officer in the late 1990s.

“No one is going to listen to me unless I sensationalized it. I’m just a little tiny voice in the middle of nowhere,” Sutcliffe said. “So I came up with the idea ... I created a website called KillerCop.com. The name (came) from the witness who witnessed me being kidnapped by these cops in retaliation. They made him disappear out of the state once they knew I was looking for him.”

The goal of the website and Twitter account is for Sutcliffe to share his story, he said, describing grievances with the criminal justice system that include when he was accused and convicted of posting former colleagues’ Social Security numbers and other personal information online in 2001. He served several years in prison, he said.

The suit also alleges that LAPD acted “negligently” by releasing undercover officers’ information, Kalinski said. That information was sent in response to a California Public Records Act request by the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition, which launched a database called “Watch the Watchers” last week making the officers’ information publicly available. The lawsuit does not involve the coalition, Kalinski added.

“This dangerous and abhorrent threat has further endangered every police officer, as well as their families,” union President Craig Lally said in a statement, “and we will be asking a judge to immediately intervene to protect our members.”

The Stop LAPD Spying Coalition’s website provides officers’ headshots, names, hire dates, ranks, and ethnicities compiled by volunteers through public records requests, Hamid Khan, an organizer with the coalition has said.

The website includes a search bar where users can type in an officer’s name or serial number to get information.

The coalition was not aware of Sutcliffe, his website, or his Twitter account using the database until they were contacted by a reporter, Khan said.

“This is all public information,” Khan said. “There’s going to be all kinds of people on Twitter and social media who are going to reference it, that’s just the nature of social media.”

In addition to the lawsuit, attorneys representing LAPPL served a cease and desist notice on Twitter and Google for the immediate removal of a “killer cops 1984” site from those social media platforms, the union said.

“We certainly hope that Twitter and Google act with a sense of urgency to remove this threatening domestic terrorism site,” Robert Rico, general counsel of the LAPPL said in a statement. “The colossal blunder perpetuated by the LAPD in releasing this sensitive information must be met with a zero-tolerance approach by these two social media companies, which should include a lifetime ban of the owner of this site.”

*City News Service contributed to this report.*