

# Former Argo football player suing police for \$14.6 million

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[CBC News](#)

A former Toronto Argonaut football player launched a \$14.6-million lawsuit on Thursday against the Peel police board, saying officers there beat him up and planted drugs on him – charges of which he was later acquitted.

Orlando Bowen, who played linebacker for the Argos from 1999 to 2002, said he is still coming to grips with what happened to him on Mar. 26, 2004.

"I'm at a loss," Bowen said.

"(I'm) just trying to make sense of the whole thing," he said Thursday as he announced his legal action against the Peel Police Services Board.

Bowen, 30, says he was in a parking lot behind a nightclub north in Mississauga, Ont., just west of Toronto, when two police officers who were working undercover pulled him over in his car.

## Wound up in jail

When he questioned why they were pulling him over he claims he was assaulted, arrested and taken to jail.

Bowen, who is black, suggested that racism was a factor in the two white officers' decision to pull him over.

"Going back over what happened that night, there really are no other reasons other than I'm a minority," he said.

"I've always been raised to not make excuses and not pull the race card, saying this happened to me because I am black."

"You don't need a statement from a police officer saying, 'I did this to him because he's black.' You can put two and two together," said Bowen's lawyer, Julian Falconer.

Bowen says he suffered a concussion and was held in his jail cell for 12 hours without medical attention.

### **Was eventually acquitted**

When the case went to trial in 2005, Bowen was acquitted. At the time one of the arresting officers was himself facing charges of trafficking cocaine.

Bowen's wife Skye says the entire incident has left her shaken.

"If this can happen to Orlando, who I know has impeccable character, it really can happen to anybody," she said.

"And that to me leaves a level of fear in me."