

BRICK CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

FACT PATTERN

Olivia Benson, a lieutenant with the Brick City Police Force, feels that she is being discriminated and retaliated against because she is a woman and/or because she complained to Brick City's EEO Officer about discrimination. Here is her story:

Olivia Benson has been a police officer with the Brick City Police Department (BCPD) for over 25 years, starting in 1998. Prior to working for the BCPD, she served in the armed forces for a year and a half before receiving an honorable discharge because she was pregnant.

In 2004, Benson sat for the test for the rank of Sergeant. Benson ranked third on the resulting Sergeant's List and was promoted to Sergeant in 2005. She was the first woman promoted to Sergeant in the BCPD's history.

In early 2012, Benson sat for test for the rank of Lieutenant. After the written competency test and interview, Benson was ranked first on the Lieutenant's List and was promoted to Lieutenant in November 2012. Benson was the first woman promoted to Lieutenant in the BCPD's history.

In 2020, as a result of criticism and treatment by Director Andrews, Lt. Benson filed a complaint with BCPD's EEO officer in which she alleged she was being discriminated against because she is a woman. While the investigation was still pending, Lt. Benson was removed from command position at Gateway Landing and re-assigned to a supervisory officer post under the command of then-Captain Cragen.

On April 1, 2021, Capt. Cragen announced that he would be promoting individuals to the rank of Captain. Lt. Benson applied. Nick Stokes, Greg Sanders, and Fin Tutuola were promoted. On April 23, 2021, Chief Cragen asked Lt. Benson if she would be interested in taking a commanding officer position again. As a result on May 5, 2021, Lt. Benson was assigned to be the Officer in Charge (OIC) of the Capital Precinct command.

In or around October 2021, Chief Cragen announced the opening of two Deputy Chief positions. Because Lt. Benson had more than eight years of continuous police experience and more than five years of command experience, she submitted her resume for consideration. Lt. Benson was not selected.

On December 11, 2021, Lt. Benson filed another EEO complaint alleging that she had been denied the promotion to Captain and Deputy Chief because of her gender. She also alleged that Chief Cragen was retaliating against her because of his relationship with and her complaints against former Director Andrews.

On July 1, 2022, Chief Cragen announced that he was restructuring the Department. As part of the restructuring, Lt. Benson transferred to the BCPD's Command Center. The Command Center is a communications and dispatch operation where Lt. Benson has limited command responsibilities.