

CRIME

North Shore anesthesiologist and technician allegedly terrorized black orderlies with nooses and racial remarks

North Shore anesthesiologist Dr. Charles Militana and surgical technician Mario Nistico terrorized orderlies Elijah Crawford and Ishmael Cox by hanging nooses and making racial comments, according to a discrimination suit filed in Brooklyn Federal Court.

BY [JOHN MARZULLI](#) / NEW YORK DAILY NEWS



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North Shore University Hospital conducted an in-house investigation instead of reporting the noose incidents to Nassau County police.

An anesthesiologist and a surgical technician at North Shore University Hospital terrorized black orderlies with nooses and racial epithets, a bombshell lawsuit charges.

"Where I work, there are a lot of educated people with an immature way of behaving," said Elijah Crawford, who filed the discrimination suit in Brooklyn Federal Court with Ishmael Cox.

"When I see a noose, it's a statement of racial hate," Crawford, 43, told the Daily News Tuesday. "It's a threat. It's a sign of terrorism."

The technician, Mario Nistico, admitted hanging a noose from a light fixture in an operating room in the summer of 2011 and affixing a second noose to his locker a year later.



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Orderlies Elijah Crawford (l.) and Ishmael Cox have filed the discrimination suit in Brooklyn Federal Court.

Dr. Charles Militana allegedly made crude sexual remarks to Crawford about the size of his genitals and disparaged President Obama because he is black, according to the suit.

"How can Obama be smart? He is black," Militana reportedly said, according to the suit.

The Manhasset, L.I., hospital did not report the noose incidents to the Nassau County Police Department and conducted an in-house investigation that resulted in "half-hearted apologies" from Nistico and Militana, both 59, the suit states. "They (the hospital) wanted to cover it up," Cox, 63, said.



NAPA

Dr. Charles Militana allegedly made sexual and racial remarks.

Nistico told The News that he regrets placing the nooses in the workplace, but there was no racial malice intended.

He said the operating noose was a “goof” directed at a surgeon who was notoriously difficult to work with, prompting operating room personnel to complain they wanted to “hang themselves.”

The noose in the locker room, he said, was the product of a discussion with Militana about capital punishment and how a condemned person could be decapitated if the hanging scaffold was too high.

“Dr. Militana asked if I knew how to make a noose,” Nistico said, and the technician showed him how to do it using surgical cord. The noose was left on the locker as an afterthought, he said.



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Cox said North Shore UH wanted to 'cover up' the noose incidents.

"It's something that was done that was stupid on my behalf," Nistico said, adding that he was suspended without pay for one week and ordered to a class on workplace behavior. He denied using racial epithets.

Militana did not return a call seeking comment.

Crawford and Cox have worked at North Shore for more than 16 years and have feared retaliation for making the complaint. The suit seeks unspecified monetary damages for emotional distress.

Their lawyer, Derek Smith, said there can be no mistaking a noose, which is associated with racially motivated lynchings and has long been used to invoke terror in blacks.

North Shore spokesman Terry Lynam said the hospital does not tolerate discrimination in the workplace: "Our policy and practices promote diversity and respect for employees. Unfortunately, we can't get into a discussion about the allegations because it's under litigation."