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Richard Emery, Accused of Sexist Remarks, Quits Police Review Board

By J. DAVID GOODMAN APRIL 13, 2016

Richard D. Emery, the chairman of the civilian agency that provides oversight of the [New York Police Department](#), resigned abruptly on Wednesday amid complaints from police unions about his public comments and one day after two agency employees filed a lawsuit accusing him of making sexist remarks.

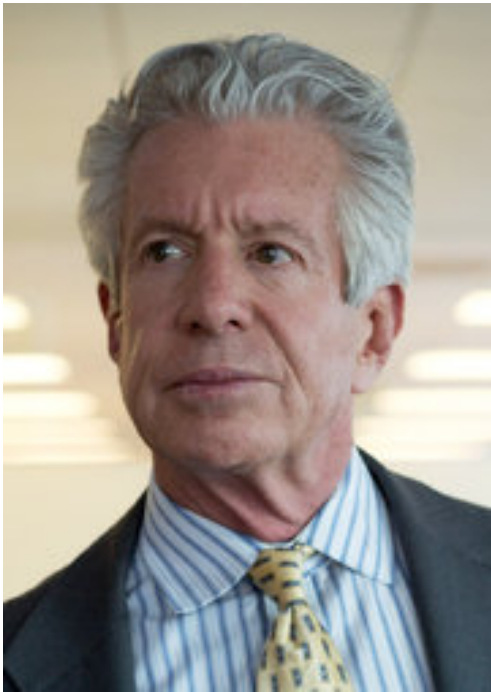
Mr. Emery's resignation from the agency, the [Civilian Complaint Review Board](#), was announced in a joint statement that he issued with Mayor [Bill de Blasio](#), who appointed Mr. Emery to the post in July 2014 and has praised his work there.

"I want to thank Richard for his service to this city," Mr. de Blasio said in the statement of Mr. Emery, a civil rights lawyer. "Over the past two years, the C.C.R.B. has resolved cases much more quickly and efficiently, and I am thankful to Richard and the entire C.C.R.B. staff for their dedication to this effort."

The departure of Mr. Emery, hours before a scheduled public meeting of the agency, followed an increasingly rancorous public debate over his leadership. Police union officials questioned the role of his law firm, Emery Celli Brinckerhoff & Abady, in representing plaintiffs in federal lawsuits against officers, and tabloid headlines focused on his public comments and private utterances to senior board staff members, which were described in the suit.

"After a lengthy substantive discussion with the mayor, he and I agree that the confluence of recent circumstances will preclude me from further fulfilling my goals," Mr. Emery, 70, said in the joint statement.

The unions representing police officers and sergeants had been calling for his removal for months, a point of tension for Mr. de Blasio, a Democrat, as he sought to mend his ties with rank-and-file officers. In February, Mr. Emery drew further ire after describing the unions as "squealing like a stuck pig."



Richard D. EmeryCreditRichard Perry/The New York Times

“Had a police officer made remarks similar to Mr. Emery’s on two occasions, that officer would have been harshly disciplined,” Patrick J. Lynch, the president of the Patrolmen’s Benevolent Association, said in a statement on Wednesday.

The suit against Mr. Emery, filed on Tuesday by the review board’s executive director, Mina Malik, and another female staff member, alleged that he had used misogynistic language. After Ms. Malik reported his alleged conduct to the city’s Law Department and Equal Employment Opportunity Office, the suit alleged, Mr. Emery tried to retaliate against Ms. Malik by “laying the groundwork” for firing her.

A lawyer for Ms. Malik, Douglas H. Wigdor, called Mr. Emery’s decision to resign “the right one” and said that he and his client were “pleased that filing this lawsuit had such a quick and positive impact on the C.C.R.B., and by extension the entire city.” The suit also names the city as a defendant; a spokesman for the Law Department said it was reviewing the complaint.

Mr. Emery was appointed to lead the review board on the day that Eric Garner of Staten Island died after being placed in a police chokehold. As chairman, he sought to transform the moribund agency, which is responsible for taking complaints of police misconduct and recommending disciplinary action to the police commissioner, by increasing its efficiency and acting as a kind of early-warning system for problematic officers.

The first board report issue during his tenure focused on the use of chokeholds by officers after an analysis of 1,100 complaints found that few if any verified cases resulted in serious punishment against officers. Subsequent reports examined officers’ false

statements and unlawful searches. Mr. Emery celebrated the increase in complaints substantiated under his watch, often because of video evidence found by agency investigators.

Yet Mr. Emery also drew criticism from police reform advocates who saw his friendship with the commissioner, William J. Bratton, and the Police Department's employment of Mr. Emery's son, Jacques Singer-Emery, as signs of a cozy relationship. Other critics saw Mr. Emery's role with the board as overly political.

Andrew Case, a former spokesman for the agency, said in an email that the resignation was "welcome news," adding that "the C.C.R.B. is meant to be impartial, not a platform for advocacy." (The current spokesman referred questions to the mayor's office.)

Deborah N. Archer, a member of the agency's board, is to serve as acting chairwoman until a replacement is named, Mr. de Blasio said.

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