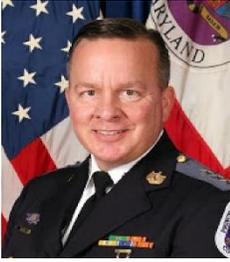


Interim police chief involved in unconstitutional detainment 16 years ago **By Ruben Castaneda**



Kevin Davis, when
he was chief of
Anne Arundel
County police

Kevin Davis, who took over as interim police commissioner after Stephanie Rawlings-Blake [fired](#) Commissioner [Anthony Batts](#) yesterday, was part of a group of Prince George's County officers who, 16 years ago, took a teenager on a controversial drive that led to a federal civil jury awarding the victim, Brian Romjue, [a \\$90,000 judgment](#). The victim testified that Davis roughed him up during the encounter.

"(Davis) and other members of a narcotics squad essentially kidnapped Romjue and took him to a remote location to terrorize him in an attempt to get information" about the teenager's then-girlfriend, the niece of a high-ranking Prince George's police commander, said Christopher Griffiths, one of Romjue's attorneys in the civil case.

The jury found Davis and the other officers violated Romjue's constitutional rights and awarded him \$90,000. The jury rejected Romjue's claim that the officers used excessive force during the encounter.

The Sun [reports](#) that, in a 2013 interview, Davis said he was given the assignment under false pretenses. "The fact that a deputy chief gave it to me, I had no reason to doubt its veracity," he said, adding that it was "quite a lesson for me as a young sergeant." Davis would go on to become deputy chief of the Prince George's County police department and, later, chief of the Anne Arundel County department.

The incident began on the night of Sept. 4, 1999, when Davis was a sergeant in Prince George's County. Romjue, 19 at the time, was riding in a car with friends in Anne Arundel County when a Chevy Blazer pulled up next to the vehicle at a trailer park.

Romjue provided his account when he testified during a federal civil rights trial in June 2002: Several men were in the Blazer. The driver of the SUV, Prince George's Police Sgt. Joseph McCann, said he and another man in the truck—Davis—wanted to talk to him about his girlfriend, Katie Nagel. Nagel was the niece of Clark R. "Bud" Price, who at the time was the second in command to Prince George's Police Chief John S. Farrell. Nagel had argued with her father, left home, and spent five days at the home of Romjue's older brother. Price asked Harry "Buddy" Robshaw to put together a team of officers to watch Romjue and try to get information from him about Nagel. (Romjue testified that Nagel had told him that her father beat her when he was drunk.)

Romjue provided this account of the encounter with the officers in June 2002 when he testified in U.S. District Court in Greenbelt in the federal civil rights trial against Davis, Robshaw, McCann, and Cpl. Stephen Piazza: Believing he had no choice, he agreed to talk to the officers, who were out of their jurisdiction, had no arrest warrant, and did not suspect the teenager of any crime. Davis got out of the Blazer, grabbed his arm and put him in the front seat of the SUV.

McCann drove to a parking lot in Howard County, leaned toward the teenager and said, "If you don't tell me where Katie is, I'll break your kneecaps, and you'll never walk again," Romjue testified. The teenager started crying and tried to leave the SUV, but Davis, in the back seat, pulled him back and slammed his head against a window two or three times. Later, Piazza grabbed him from behind and choked him.

After about five hours, at around 1 a.m., the officers dropped him off at his home, Romjue testified.

Davis and each of the other defendants testified they never physically harmed Romjue. They also testified they never wrote any reports or memos about their surveillance and questioning of Romjue, contrary to their department's criminal investigations manual. Davis and the other officers also testified they never read a two-page missing persons report filed by Nagel's parents, which said she left home on her own accord and did not suggest she was in any danger.

An internal investigation by the Prince George's police department found no wrongdoing by any of the officers. According to The Sun, Davis was also [named as a defendant](#) in a 1993 lawsuit, in which "a young man alleged that Davis threw him to the ground and handcuffed him without explanation. He won a \$12,500 jury award against Davis, according to court records."

The episodes did not appear to hinder Davis' rise as a police commander. He was appointed deputy chief of the Prince George's police force in 2009, and left in 2013 to become chief of the Anne Arundel County Police Department.

Davis left Anne Arundel in December 2014, after the county executive who had hired him was defeated in an election.

He joined the [Baltimore Police Department](#) in January, as deputy chief. Davis may be a fine choice for interim chief, but the public should know his record, Griffiths said. "It's been a long time, maybe he's proven himself, but people should know the history," Griffiths said. "He's in a position of public trust."