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Los Angeles

Ex-LAPD Officer Gets Life for Rapes

The former 77th Street Division patrolman attacked three women while on duty.

April 25, 2003 | Steve Berry | Times Staff Writer

A former Los Angeles police officer convicted of raping three women was sentenced to life in prison Thursday in Los Angeles County Superior Court.

Judge Norman P. Tarle sentenced Joseph Evan Robinson, 27, a onetime 77th Street Division patrol officer, to three consecutive terms of 25 years to life plus 22 years for the offenses, all of which occurred when the three-year veteran was on duty.

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Prosecutors said Robinson will serve more than 80 years before the parole board can consider releasing him.

A jury found Robinson guilty of 14 counts in January. The charges included rape, kidnapping to commit rape, forcible rape and other sexual offenses. He was relieved of duty in April 2002.

Outside court, Deputy Dist. Atty. Margo Baxter said Robinson deserved no leniency. Baxter said the sentencing law was designed to keep repeat offenders off the street. "This defendant could not stop," she said.

In one case, Robinson and his partner confronted the victim in January 2002 as she was parked in a car with her boyfriend at 64th and Figueroa streets. After determining that she had an outstanding warrant, he fondled her, took her to a nearby alley out of sight of his partner and her boyfriend, and raped her, according to a probation report.

Two weeks later, Robinson and his partner entered a motel room on Figueroa Street where the second victim was sleeping with her boyfriend. Robinson found marijuana in the room. After his partner took the boyfriend out of the room, Robinson handcuffed the woman and sexually assaulted her in the

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bathroom and again in the bedroom, the report said.

At one point, he told her, "I'm the police, and I will do anything I want," the probation report said. He then warned her not to tell anyone.

Robinson met the third woman a month later at 47th Street and Figueroa, where she was waiting for a bus, according to the report. The report said Robinson forced her into his patrol vehicle and drove her several blocks away, where he handcuffed and then raped her in the back seat of the car, the report said.

Robinson used his authority as a police officer to "place these victims in extremely fearful conditions," Lacaria Williams, a probation official, wrote in the report. "The planning, sophistication and professionalism with which these crimes were carried out ... indicate premeditation," she wrote.

Ira Salzman, Robinson's lawyer, filed notice of appeal. He said his client continues to maintain his innocence. Salzman argued against the sentence, saying that Robinson would get a longer sentence than many murderers. He said none of the victims was seriously injured.

Tarle rejected the request, saying that the law left him little leeway. Robinson "was completely in control of each situation.... He just didn't believe he would get caught."

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