

Local/State 

Police officers' answers to internal affairs being questioned

Thursday, August 11, 2011



Raleigh Police cars (WTVD Photo)

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RALEIGH (WTVD) -- Two Raleigh police officers' statuses have changed after their answers to department's internal affairs unit is being questioned.

Raleigh Police Senior Officer Matt Cooper is on administrative leave and Sergeant Eric DeSimone is on administrative duty while police investigate whether they told Internal Affairs the truth when they answered questions about former Raleigh Police Sergeant Rick Armstrong.

Armstrong, who was fired in June, told ABC11 weeks after his dismissal that he could not reveal why he was fired, but said it had nothing to do with a probe centered on a tip that some officers were allegedly having sex with a local prostitute.

Armstrong resigned his position as President of Raleigh Police Protective Association (RPPA) during the investigation and DeSimone is the current President of the organization.

Chip Roth, the spokesman for Teamsters Local 391, which represents RPPA, confirms the change in status Thursday.

"DeSimone's badge and gun were taken from him Tuesday and he's assigned to desk duty for now," Roth said.

He said Cooper's status changed the same day.

Roth says DeSimone and Cooper are not being accused of sexual misconduct.

"They were asked questions about the Rick Armstrong investigation. The Raleigh Police Department is concerned that those answers may not be honest," he said. "I have looked at the documentation and I believe that their answers were in fact honest and there is no foundation for them having been removed from their jobs. I believe this process will put them back to work and clear their good names. They're both very good police officers and I think they'll be restored to duty, hopefully very soon."

No evidence has been presented publically saying the accused officers broke the law, although months have passed since snippets of information about the investigation leaked out. No charges have been filed in the case.

Two officers named by ABC11 sources quit the department voluntarily before Armstrong was fired.

Roth says Armstrong met with Chief Harry Dolan on Aug. 1 about appealing his firing and should learn whether he'll be reinstated within 10 business days.

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