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# Thibodaux police officer allegedly raped Nicholls student

Thibodaux, LA Weather



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**Published:** Thursday, September 2, 2010

**Updated:** Wednesday, June 8, 2011 18:06

A Thibodaux police officer allegedly raped a Nicholls student in her La Maison du Bayou on campus apartment early Friday morning. Officer Corey Morris of the Thibodaux Police Department was on duty and working in downtown Thibodaux when someone approached him asking him to drive their friend, who was intoxicated and vomiting at the time, home.

Officer Morris then went into the student's apartment in La Maison du Bayou "uninvited," according to the police report of the interview done with the alleged victim.

Morris said in the police report that he went into her room to "help her get to her bedroom due to her being intoxicated."

Once the student got to her bedroom, she laid down and was "so intoxicated that she fell into a semi conscious state" in which she could not "move, talk or open her eyes," according to the police report.

While the student said the officer came into her room and began to have non-consensual sex with her according to the police report, Morris said she verbally consented to have sex.

The girl said "due to her semi conscious state, she was unable to resist the officer while he was having sex with her," according to the police report.

Morris left only after he "became concerned that what he was doing was wrong," according to the police report.



Ashley Falterman

Officer Corey Morris.

While this was happening, University officer Sergeant Michael Richard was patrolling the area around the apartments. He noticed a Thibodaux Police car unoccupied with its lights on and engine running.

After consulting with Nicholls' University Police and the Thibodaux Police Department, Richard was informed that there was not supposed to be a Thibodaux police officer at Nicholls at the present time.

Richard then found Morris walking from the apartments to his car. Richard began talking to Morris, and Morris said that he drove an intoxicated female student from the downtown area to her apartment. Morris told Richard that he (Morris) "had to sit with her for a few minutes because she was nauseated from being intoxicated," according to the police report.

Richard then went to the girl's apartment, where she was alone and asked her if she was ok, the girl answered "yes," and Richard left.

After the interviews and Morris' statement were submitted the next day, Lieutenant Steve Tullis of University Police "contacted 17th Judicial District Judge Walter Lanier and requested that an arrest warrant be issued for Officer Morris for La. R.S 14:43, Simple Rape," according to the police report.

Simple rape, according to Babcock Partners, Louisiana Trial Lawyers, is " a rape committed when the anal, oral or vaginal sexual intercourse is deemed to be without the lawful consent of a victim."

Babcock Partners also had several conditions for simple rape and the one that applies to this case is "when the victim is incapable of resisting or of understanding the nature of the act by reason of a stupor or abnormal condition of mind produced by an intoxicating agent or any cause, and the offender knew or should have known of the victim's incapacity."

After receiving the request, Lanier approved and set a bond of \$50,000.

Tullis then arrested Morris and brought Morris to the Lafourche Parish Detention Center where he was later released after posting bond.

Morris was immediately suspended until Monday morning, when he resigned in a letter before a formal internal hearing.

Detective Joey Quinn, public information officer of the Thibodaux Police Department, did not return any phone calls made by The Nicholls Worth since early Monday morning, nor was he in his office Tuesday for a statement on the case.

Thibodaux Police Chief Craig Melancon was not in his office either on Tuesday but he previously spoke with other local newspapers about the situation.

Melancon said, "This is a situation that is unforgivable. It's a horrible situation I would not begin to justify. He has caused a great deal of pain within this department and for this young woman and her family."

Morris is an Air Force Reserve Veteran who recently returned from Iraq but never received a psychological evaluation.

Melancon said male officers who escort women up to a 10th of a mile away must call for backup from a female officer. He also said, "a female officer may not have been available" in this case.

Before this case, Morris had no known disciplinary problems with the department, was involved with Night Out Against Crime and was "up for nomination for employee of the month," Melancon said.

This is not the first Thibodaux Police Department officer that has been involved with a rape accusation. In 2007, an officer was charged with aggravated rape.

Including Morris and the 2007 case, six other law enforcers have been either charged, accused or are still up for criminal charges, all associated with rape.

Nicholls' University Police Chief Craig Jaccuzzo said "we have policies in place" and described certain policies such as writing tickets for cars without decals or a vehicle permit and checking in visitors who stay over so that "we can somewhat be aware of what is in our surroundings."

"You hear students too often complain," Jaccuzzo said. "They feel their freedom is restricted, and they 'have to report this' or 'I have to say this.' It's because of the precautions of what has happened."

Jaccuzzo also said everything links together from the call boxes, student services, RAD (rape aggression defense against attackers), alcohol education and knowing your limits and when you've consumed too much.

"All these precautions are there to prevent you from being a victim at the first level and we (University Police) will always be there to support our student body," Jaccuzzo said.