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By Jason Meisner | Tribune reporter
May 25, 2011

A 22-year-old Chicago woman who was allegedly raped by two on-duty Chicago police officers filed a federal lawsuit today alleging a "widespread practice" of abuse within the department that goes largely unpunished.

The suit, which names the City of Chicago, Officer Paul Clavijo and his partner, Officer Juan Vasquez, alleged that the abuse is facilitated by a "code of silence" among officers and unwillingness by supervisors to investigate and punish wrongdoing.

"Chicago police officers accused of sexual misconduct against citizens can be confident that the city will not investigate those accusations in earnest," said the lawsuit, which was filed in federal court.

The suit seeks unspecified damages. Chicago Law Department spokeswoman Jennifer Hoyle was not immediately available for comment.

Clavijo and Vasquez, both 38, were charged earlier this month with criminal sexual assault and official misconduct in the March 30 assault.

Prosecutors said the officers were on patrol in a marked police SUV about 2 a.m. when they saw the woman walking alone near Wrigley Field and offered a ride to her Rogers Park apartment, located several miles outside their patrol district.

While Vasquez went into a liquor store to buy booze, Clavijo sexually assaulted the woman in the front seat of the vehicle, prosecutors said. Later, the officers followed the victim into her apartment, where they allegedly played strip poker and raped her.

The lawsuit states that the woman "did not consent in any way" to having sex with the officers.

Clavijo was also charged in the sexual assault of a 26-year-old woman three weeks earlier. In that case, both officers gave the woman a ride home, and Clavijo attacked her while Vasquez was in the bathroom, prosecutors said.

Although prosecutors said that victim did not initially report the attack because she was afraid the police knew where she lived, the lawsuit alleged she had reported the assault before the March 30 incident, but the department failed to take Clavijo and Vasquez off the street.

"The city has a disciplinary mechanism to investigate abuses that doesn't work," Jon Loevy, the woman's attorney, said today in a telephone interview.

The city relieved both officers of their police powers March 31. They are each free on \$500,000 bond.

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