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## Two cops charged with sexual assault

One officer faces charges in a second incident

May 12, 2011 | By Jason Meisner and Jeremy Gomer, Tribune reporters

A veteran Chicago police officer was charged with sexually assaulting two women in separate attacks just weeks apart in March while he was on duty and in uniform, and his partner was accused of raping one of the alleged victims.

Cook County prosecutors said the officers offered each victim a ride home as they patrolled near Wrigley Field in their marked police SUV in the early morning hours of their overnight shift.

At least one of the women was heavily intoxicated at the time, authorities said.

Officer Paul Clavijo, 38, was charged in the sexual assaults of a 26-year-old woman on March 10 and a 22-year-old woman on March 30. He was also charged with official misconduct in both incidents.

Officer Juan Vasquez, also 38, was charged with sexual assault and official misconduct in the March 30 case. Authorities said Vasquez was present during the March 10 assault, but he was not charged in that incident.

Chicago police relieved both officers of their police powers March 31 and said at least one of them was under criminal investigation for the previous day's alleged sexual assault. At the time, an outraged Terry Hillard, the interim police superintendent, noted he was a father as he criticized their conduct as "inappropriate — you can't justify it."

Attorneys for the two officers, both 10-year veterans of the police force, said Thursday that their clients were guilty only of bad judgment.

Jon Loevy, a lawyer for the woman allegedly assaulted March 30 by both officers, blasted the claim, calling it an "outrageous way to spin this."

"These are on-duty police officers," Loevy said. "They were armed with guns. She was a young woman who was not in a situation where she had a choice."

Clavijo remained in Cook County Jail on Thursday night on \$500,000 bond, but Vasquez was released after the required 10 percent of his \$500,000 bond was posted. The short, balding officer walked briskly past a throng of reporters without answering questions and jumped into a waiting SUV.

State's Attorney Anita Alvarez said the officers "essentially destroyed" their oath of office.

"As citizens, we are all expected to follow the orders of police officers and to respect their authority," Alvarez said. "These officers committed an extremely offensive violation of that trust, luring vulnerable young women into a situation that should have been protective."

Prosecutors said Clavijo and Vasquez saw the 22-year-old victim walking alone about 2 a.m. March 30 near Addison Street and Sheffield Avenue, across from Wrigley Field and offered her 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 had sex with the woman in the front seat of the vehicle, Assistant State's Attorney Patti Sudendorf said.

"The victim believed she could not say no to Clavijo's sexual advances and had to do whatever the police officer asked her to do," Sudendorf said.

At the woman's apartment, they played strip poker and both officers sexually assaulted her,

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according to the prosecutor.

"The victim was extremely intoxicated and began to scream for help and physically pound on her apartment walls and neighbors' doors," Sudendorf said.

One neighbor, who didn't want her name used because she is a witness in the case, told the Tribune she dialed 911 after hearing the woman pounding on a wall that their apartments share. While she was on the phone with dispatchers, she heard her neighbor screaming, "Help me! Somebody please help me!" she said.

The neighbor said that when she grabbed a can of pepper spray and ran into the hallway, she found the victim knocking on doors for help.

"She was in shock — traumatized," the neighbor said. She said that when she told the woman police were on the way, the woman replied, "It was the cops who did this to me!"

The woman's blood-alcohol level, taken at a hospital, was measured at 0.38 percent, nearly five times the legal limit to drive, Sudendorf said.

Shortly after the woman's allegations were reported, the 26-year-old woman came forward and told investigators she had been picked up by Clavijo and his partner — whom prosecutors identified as Vasquez — about 1 a.m. March 10 as she waited for a bus at the intersection of Clark Street and Sheffield Avenue.

At her Ravenswood apartment, outside the officer's district boundaries, Clavijo sexually assaulted the woman while his partner was in her bathroom, Sudendorf said. The woman later identified Clavijo in a police lineup, authorities said.

According to Alvarez, the victim did not immediately report the assault because she was "intimidated the offenders were police officers and knew where she lived."

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