

Two ex-cops plead guilty to misconduct

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Juan Vasquez, left, and Paul Clavijo each pleaded guilty Jan. 22 to a single felony count official misconduct. (Cook County Sheriff's Office photos)

Two Chicago police officers indicted for sexually assaulting a woman while on duty each have pleaded guilty to felony official misconduct in a plea deal that alleges no sexual wrongdoing on their part and keeps them from serving time in prison.

The officers' misconduct drew outrage from officials at the time of the incident in March 2011. Cook County State's Attorney Anita Alvarez told reporters that the two had "essentially destroyed" their oath of office, while then-interim Chicago police Superintendent Terry Hillard dubbed the allegations "heinous criminal activity" that offended him as a father.

But Alvarez's office put out no public announcement after Paul Clavijo, and Juan Vasquez, both 41, each pleaded guilty Jan. 22 to a single felony count and were sentenced by Judge Lawrence Flood to two years of probation. Both had faced many years in prison after being indicted in May 2011 on 26 counts of criminal sexual assault, criminal sexual abuse and official misconduct.

Clavijo was also charged with the sexual assault of a second woman while also on-duty about three weeks before the other alleged rape.

Both officers pleaded guilty to official misconduct involving battery. There was no reference to the alleged sex crimes. They won't have to register as sex offenders.

Sally Daly, a spokeswoman for the state's attorney, said Friday that the plea agreement was "the best possible outcome" in the case "based on the circumstances" and won the support of both alleged victims, neither of whom now live in the Chicago area. Court records show one victim's blood alcohol content was measured that night at 0.38 percent, nearly five times the legal limit to drive, prosecutors previously reported.

The felony conviction will preclude Clavijo and Vasquez from working again as police officers, Daly said. The two resigned months ago.

In a statement submitted to the court, the victim of the first alleged sexual assault said the ordeal changed her life. She had once been outgoing, but after the alleged assault, she stayed home, cried frequently and couldn't sleep at night.

"I hate the fact that these individuals took advantage of their badges," she wrote. "They are supposed to be the most respected people on the streets and they are criminals. I'm never going to feel truly safe again."

Vasquez's lawyer, Daniel Herbert, said prosecutors agreed to the deal because there were no

sexual assaults — an assertion that Daly denied.

"What happened was the state came to the realization that this thing was what we'd said it was all along — a consensual incident that wasn't a criminal sexual assault," Herbert said.

The two officers were working the Town Hall District midnight shift in a marked Chevrolet Tahoe on March 30, 2011, when they saw a 22-year-old woman crying near the CTA's Addison Red Line station, court records show.

The woman's friend told police he'd met her at the station to return her cellphone charger after she'd spent much of the night at his home. He saw her being stopped by the police vehicle but drove away, assuming the officers would help her get on the train, according to the records.

Instead, the officers offered to give the highly intoxicated woman a ride to her Rogers Park apartment — located outside their district — and invited her into the front seats, where she sat on Clavijo's lap, the records show. The officers then stopped at a liquor store, where Vasquez went inside to buy vodka while Clavijo allegedly sexually assaulted the woman, prosecutors said.

At the woman's apartment, the three played strip poker, and the woman was allegedly sexually assaulted again. One of the cops allegedly asked, "Would you like to be tag-teamed by two police officers?" according to records.

The woman began to scream and pound on the walls, then ran out into the hall of her apartment building, where she pounded on neighbors' doors. She told one neighbor "the cops raped me," the records show.

Police found Vasquez's cellphone and other police items — including a navy blue CPD dickey — in the alleged victim's apartment, according to records.

After her allegations became public, a 26-year-old woman came forward and alleged that Clavijo had sexually assaulted her in her Ravenswood apartment March 10 after Clavijo and Vasquez picked her up while she waited for a bus at Clark Street and Sheffield Avenue.

Tribune reporter Jeremy Gerner contributed.

sschmadeke@tribune.com