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Nine Child Molestation Counts Against Police Officer Dropped

May 29, 1987 | JERRY HICKS | Times Staff Writer

Nine charges of child molestation against a Los Angeles police officer accused of befriending several young boys for lewd purposes while on duty were dismissed Thursday in North Orange County Municipal Court.

"I'm relieved," Doyle John Craig, 35, of Anaheim, an 11-year veteran of the Los Angeles Police Department, said after leaving the courtroom. "This has been a witch hunt from the beginning."

Craig was suspended from duty without pay after he was charged in January with five felony and four misdemeanor counts of child molestation following a police internal affairs investigation. A Police Department board of rights hearing now will be held to determine whether he should be reinstated or dismissed.

Judge Rules Evidence Insufficient

Cmdr. William D. Booth, spokesman for the Police Department, defended the internal affairs investigation and said: "No one should be optimistic that today's dismissal of the charges will mean the same result when he appears before the board of rights."

Before the charges were dismissed, Judge Linda L. Miller ruled Thursday morning that the Police Department had not had sufficient evidence of wrongdoing to search the house where Craig lived alone. That meant the testimony of four of Craig's alleged victims, whose interviews with police had resulted from that house search, could not be used against him.

Deputy Dist. Atty. Dennis D. Bauer then questioned the only remaining alleged victim in the felony case against Craig. The boy, now 12, testified that last summer when he was staying at Craig's house the officer had touched him on the waist when he was fully clothed.

After the boy's testimony, Miller called a private conference with Bauer and Craig's attorney, Paul J. Wallin.

Wallin said later that the judge had appeared incredulous and told the prosecution that she didn't understand how that conduct could possibly amount to a felony.

Bauer asked for a brief recess and returned to court to tell the judge that he would present no more evidence and would submit the case for her decision without further comment.

Miller then dismissed all five felony charges and all but one of the misdemeanor charges against Craig. Bauer asked the judge to state her reasons for dismissing the charges, and Miller answered that there wasn't any evidence that Craig had intended to do anything to anyone.

Then, to the astonishment of Craig's lawyer, Bauer asked the judge to dismiss the remaining misdemeanor charge as well. Bauer left the courtroom without comment and could not be reached later.

"There was never any child molesting going on," Wallin said. "There wasn't a single boy who even said

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that anything like that happened."

The accusations against Craig included showing pornographic pictures to boys ranging in age from 11 to the late teens, making lewd remarks in front of them and taking nude pictures of some of them. There also were charges of lewd and lascivious conduct that involved touching, but Wallin said there was no evidence anywhere, except for the waist-touching incident, that Craig had touched any young boy.

Wallin said the charges involving nude pictures of boys "is the most telling comment about this whole thing. Of 400 pictures found in the search (of Craig's house), there were six pictures showing some of the kids on a camping trip mooning for the camera. And some of those pictures were taken by the other boys. It was just camp fun, certainly nothing like they're trying to make it sound."

The pornographic pictures, Wallin said, were in a copy of Hustler magazine that one of the boys had found at Craig's home and everyone joked about.

'Done Nothing Improper'

Craig said after the dismissals, "I have done nothing improper with any of these boys." He said he had only tried to befriend some young barrio boys who needed someone to take an interest in them.

"Ask any of them," he said. "They'll tell you they don't even understand what this is all about."

Craig said he believed that the investigation started when another police officer overheard one young boy calling him at the department and wondered if something wrong might be going on.

Craig added confidently that "I will get my job back."

But Cmdr. Booth said the rules for the board of rights are not the same as those in a courtroom.

"This was not a witch hunt," Booth said. "This was a very extensive and a very fine investigation."

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