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Police Officer Is Charged In Rape of Bronx Girl, 17

By DAVID M. HERSZENHORN

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A Bronx police officer has been charged with raping a 17-year-old girl whom he arrested in a domestic dispute on Tuesday and whose release from jail he arranged the next day with no charges being filed, police and prosecutors said yesterday.

The authorities said the 27-year-old officer, Rafael Suarez, promised after arresting the girl to get her out of jail, and that once he did he took her to his home in the Highbridge section of the Bronx, put his hand on his gun, ordered her to remove her clothes and raped her repeatedly.

Officer Suarez, who is assigned to the 43d Precinct in Soundview, was arrested on Wednesday and charged with rape, aggravated sexual abuse, menacing, sexual misconduct, official misconduct and harassment. He was suspended indefinitely from the police force on Wednesday afternoon.

According to the complaint filed against him in Bronx Criminal Court, Officer Suarez showed up at Central Booking in civilian clothes Wednesday morning to secure the girl's release.

"Didn't I tell you that I could get you out?" Officer Suarez said to her, according to the court complaint. "I keep my promises."

Later in the day, after the attack, the officer told her, "I swear if you tell a soul what happened I'll put you back in jail," according to an affidavit filed by Sgt. Gary McDonald of the Bronx Internal Affairs Bureau.

The police did not provide details of the domestic dispute that led to the girl's arrest, saying only that it had occurred within the 43d Precinct.

Officer Suarez was arraigned yesterday before Judge Frank Torres in Criminal Court in the Bronx and was held on \$20,000 bail.

Gloria Cullen, a spokeswoman for the Bronx District Attorney, said the girl had spent Tuesday night in Central Booking and that Officer Suarez was off duty when he returned to Central Booking.

Capt. Michael Collins, a police spokesman, confirmed that Officer Suarez had taken part in the girl's release and said that his actions in arranging the release were under investigation. "As a matter of routine he would be part of her release if they were not going to prosecute the case," Captain Collins said.

But he said that Officer Suarez would not have been able to arrange the release on his own. Procedure dictates that a decision not to file charges be made in consultation with the District Attorney's office and, perhaps, with higher-ranking police officials, the captain said.

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1

|

2

|

NEXT PAGE >

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Page 1 of 2