

Lubbock police officer arrested on sexual assault charges involving adopted daughters

Former Lubbock Police Officer Jason Wesley Hignight seemed to have it all before he was arrested Tuesday night on charges he sexually assaulted his two adopted daughters, ages 12 and 16.

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By [Robin Pyle](#)

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Former Lubbock Police Officer Jason Wesley Hignight seemed to have it all before he was arrested Tuesday night on charges he sexually assaulted his two adopted daughters, ages 12 and 16.

Hignight, who turned 32 Wednesday, had graduated from the Lubbock Police Academy in June — becoming one of 13 who made it through the 23-week academy after an extensive background investigation.

He had just started working the streets of Lubbock as a patrol officer after successfully completing five months of duty with a field training officer.

Wedding photos posted on his MySpace page showed him as a happy groom decked out in a tuxedo next to his smiling bride in 2007.

He was a foster parent turned adoptive dad and had earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from Texas Tech in 2003, where he was involved in a fraternity and held an active broker's license connected with a local real estate and property management company — Wilson-Night Property Services, according to public records.

But arrest affidavits released Wednesday revealed a much more disturbing picture of Hignight, who was charged with sexually abusing his 16-year-old adoptive daughter. He also is accused of inappropriately touching his 12-year-old adoptive daughter.

Detectives learned of the accusations Tuesday afternoon after the children's adoptive mother brought them to the police station.

She told police she walked into one of the girls' bedrooms to see Hignight in the process of a sexual assault.

Lubbock police officials placed Hignight under arrest at about 9:30 p.m. Tuesday at the Police Department after obtaining a late evening arrest warrant, Lubbock Police Capt. Greg Stevens said. Hignight, who was booked into the Lubbock County Jail with bail set at \$200,000, resigned shortly before his arrest.

He was formally charged with sexual assault of a child and indecency with a child.

Hignight, who was hired by the Police Department on Jan. 4, 2010, was still under a probationary status at the time of his resignation, according to the department.

Attorney information wasn't available for Hignight in public record.

Hignight's 16-year-old adoptive daughter told police the sexual abuse began about three years ago when she was staying with the couple before she was officially adopted.

She said the abuse continued after Hignight became a police officer — usually on his days off of Tuesday and Wednesday.

The girls said he always did it when their adoptive mom was not around, such as when she was in the shower or out of town.

Hignight apparently provided a much different picture of the situation on MySpace.

In a post that appeared to have been written three to four years ago on the public profile purported to belong to Hignight, he wrote: "We are in the process of fostering 3 awesome kids, really look forward to completing the process, and we keep them every other weekend and holidays for now... but by March, we should be in great shape for full-time!"

At the time, he said he was 28 and had recently gotten married.

Texas adoptions

Hignight's case was the second high-profile one in Lubbock in about a month involving an adoptive father charged with sexually assaulting his adopted daughters.

In late December, police arrested Henrique Cruz, 51, on charges of 16 counts of continuous sexual abuse involving his four adopted daughters. The abuse allegedly started in 2001, shortly after he and his wife adopted the girls out of the foster care system in Texas.

Paul Zimmerman, regional spokesman for the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, said the agency couldn't confirm or deny a case involving Hignight. He cited confidentiality rules that prevented the release of any information in cases other than ones involving a child's death or a court-ordered removal from a home.

Speaking generally, he said, the process to adopt a child from foster care in Texas comes with extensive background checks.

Zimmerman said the process included mandatory classes by adoptive parents as well as a home study, which in total usually takes at least six months.

"There's a long test period," he added.

The state also requires a six-month check after the adoption has taken place just to "double check" that the situation is working out, he added. However, the state doesn't have any legal bounds for monitoring a family after the first six-month period has passed.

LPD screening

Police didn't see any red flags either.

Stevens said there weren't any issues that came up during a several monthslong background investigation on Hignight.

While he couldn't speak specifically regarding what police found out about Hignight during the hiring process, he did say there was nothing there that prevented him from being a police officer.

"He clearly passed," Stevens said.

He described the local department's hiring process as very exhaustive and intense.

Department officials spend months conducting background investigations, which include such things as criminal history checks, polygraph tests, drug screenings and psychological tests. The agency also talks with numerous named references as well as unnamed sources in the applicant's life.

Stevens said it's important how an agency handles the situation after it comes up — that shows the true character of a department, not the actions of the individual officer.

When officers learned of the accusations at about 2:30 p.m. Tuesday, Stevens said two investigations were launched — one criminal and one internal.

“When something like that comes up, we handle it aggressively,” Stevens said. “You have to take an aggressive approach because the public's counting on you to do that.”

Nobody went home until they felt like the situation was properly examined, he said.

“We police our own,” Stevens added.

Hignight's arrest was the second in about 10 months involving a Lubbock police officer being accused of illegal sexual activity involving a minor.

In April, police arrested former police officer Jason Wayne Davis, 26, on charges he sent sexually explicit messages and photos to a 16-year-old girl.

The Police Department didn't have any indication that Hignight committed misconduct while on duty. However, the investigation was ongoing, police said.

Hignight remained jailed Wednesday afternoon.

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Sources: Lubbock Police Department, Lubbock police reports, arrest affidavits

Jason Hignight, 32

- ☐ Hired by LPD: Jan. 4, 2010.
- ☐ Graduated from police academy: June 11, 2010.
- ☐ Resigned from LPD: Jan. 19, 2011.
- ☐ Charged with two felonies: Sexual assault of a child; indecency with a child.
- ☐ Reported victims: Adoptive daughters, ages 12 and 16.
- ☐ Bond set: \$200,000.

