

'Model' New Orleans cop had secret life for years as serial sexual predator, police say

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2016 Cop Pedophile rapist Marcellus White

For years, the New Orleans Police Department held Marcellus White out as a model cop. His work mentoring young Iberville housing development residents won him an "Angel Award," glowing newspaper profiles and the praise of future NOPD Superintendent Eddie Compass.

But lurking beneath the surface, New Orleans police now allege, was a serial sexual predator.

White now stands accused of molesting and assaulting at least four boys over the course of 16 years.

On Monday, he was rebooked on 13 new sex crimes counts, two months after he was first accused of raping a 14-year-old boy this spring. Magistrate Commissioner Brigid Collins set his bail on the new counts at more than \$2 million.

The 19-year NOPD veteran has confessed to several of the assaults, according to a warrant for his arrest. That warrant says White was in a position to victimize other young boys along the way, and it raises questions about how the Police Department could have missed for so many years what detectives now say was "pervasive" sexual abuse.

White groomed several of his victims through his role as a karate instructor at the Iberville housing development and as a youth mentor on behalf of his fraternity, Phi Beta Sigma, police say.

Police allege that in 2000, White insisted on driving a then 11-year-old boy a few blocks home. The boy was a member of both White's Iberville Scorpions Karate Academy and his Sigma Beta Club, a program of the Phi Beta Sigma fraternity.

White asked the young boy to show him his penis, police said. When the boy tried to struggle his way free, police said, White locked the doors of his unmarked vehicle. Police said that after White touched his penis, the boy jumped out of the car.

"I remember what happened in that situation," White said in an interview with a Public Integrity Bureau sergeant, according to a warrant. "I asked to see it. He showed it to me. I reached over and I grabbed for it. He flinched. He felt uncomfortable. I didn't push the issue any further."

Another boy, a 14-year-old member of the Beta Club, was molested in the living room of White's residence in the 3100 block of Rue Parc Fontaine in Algiers, police said.

Some of the worst assaults were reserved for another boy who was 10 when the attacks began,

police said. White repeatedly raped this boy in the rectum, police said.

“Maybe three or four times I can remember,” White told officers.

Investigators said this victim told them “he was afraid of Officer White because he was a well-known police officer and no one would believe him.”

Although the alleged assaults spanned years, the Public Integrity Bureau does not appear to have become aware of the incidents until this year. In late March or early April, a 14-year-old boy told interviewers, White forcibly performed oral sex on him.

White was arrested Sept. 23 on counts of second-degree rape, indecent behavior with a juvenile and molestation of a juvenile in connection with that alleged victim.

After he was placed on emergency suspension, investigators with the Public Integrity Bureau and the Special Victims Section quickly expanded the scope of their investigation to include his work as a youth mentor.

The 14-year-old boy involved in the spring incident told investigators that White tutored him through a program with the Sigma Beta Club, according to a search warrant for White’s computers and hard drives.

White told a detective in an interview that he had mentored young men between the ages of 8 and 18. He said that on out-of-state trips and outings he had “total care, custody and control of numerous children,” according to the Oct. 3 warrant.

“The children of the Sigma Beta Club were routinely at his residence where White lived alone and would often stay overnight,” according to the warrant.

White was also in close contact with children for years through his role as a “sensei” at the Iberville Scorpions Karate Academy. White helped found the academy when he served as a community policing officer assigned to the Iberville housing development, according to a biography for a 2003 Angel Award that he received from the Blue Cross Foundation.

“White saw a pressing need for a productive way for the children who live there to spend their leisure time — something to serve as an alternative to the violence, vandalism and drug abuse he was all too familiar with from his own childhood in the Desire housing development,” the award citation said.

Eddie Compass III, at the time a captain in the 1st District, told a newspaper reporter in 1999 that he had recruited White to work with kids in his district.

“I knew he'd be the man for the job. Having grown up in public housing, I thought he'd be the perfect role model for the kids,” Compass said.

But White's star in the department dimmed somewhat after he was one of several officers involved in the controversial 2009 shooting of Adolph Grimes III in the 6th Ward. The Police Department later cleared him and seven other officers in the case.

According to jail records, White was rebooked Monday on first-degree rape, four counts of second-degree rape, one count of simple kidnapping, one count of false imprisonment, two counts of indecent behavior with a juvenile, two counts of molestation of a juvenile, four counts of sexual battery and one count of possession of a firearm with an obliterated serial number.

The gun count adds another element to the allegations against White. Police alleged in a warrant that they found a .38-caliber handgun with an obliterated serial number inside a bag in his locker at the 2nd District Station.

When queried, police said, "White stated he received the gun from a citizen in 2007, and he placed the gun in his bag and he forgot about it."

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