



Fayetteville Police Officer Investigated for Sexual Assault

Kate Jordan | Posted: Wednesday, January 29, 2014 8:00 am

Detectives at the Fayetteville Police Department were assigned to investigate a sexual assault involving an on-duty Fayetteville police officer and a local resident over winter break according to documents obtained from FPD. While this is the first time this has happened at FPD, studies show that, nationwide, there were nearly 5,000 reports of police misconduct.

Results of a study performed by the American Public Health Association show that out of 318 participants, 31 percent reported rape by an officer.

“From a police officer’s perspective, this is perhaps the most reprehensible violation of trust that’s probably out there for the fact that an officer is placed under the position of authority and trust and this has violated that trust of the public,” Stout said. “Not only has this impacted us, it’s impacted several other agencies.”

Other agencies nationwide have been affected by similar situations.

In 2010, nearly \$350 million was spent in the U.S. on misconduct-related civil judgments and settlements, excluding sealed settlements, court costs and attorney fees, according to the CATO Institute of Research. During that entire year, CATO performed a study by collecting, gathering, researching and analyzing police records, statistics and data.

As a result, nearly 5,000 reports of police misconduct were tracked. Nearly 7,000 victims were allegedly involved. More than 6,600 law enforcement officers were involved, 354 were agency leaders, such as chiefs or sheriffs, according to CATO Institute data. It was reported that more than 9 percent of complaints were sexual misconduct complaints. More than 4 percent were assault-type complaints made against law enforcement officials.

“This is the first time something to this extent has happened at FPD,” Stout said.

Former police officer Jamison Stiles, 31, was booked into Washington County Detention Center, Dec. 20, on felony charges of rape, second-degree sexual assault, residential burglary and disclosure to an unauthorized person.

Two women have reported being sexually assaulted by Stiles, said Sgt. Craig Stout, public information officer for FPD.

A woman reported that she had been out for a night of drinking Oct. 26. Later the same night, she woke up around 4:30 a.m. with a uniformed police officer standing over her, police said.

The victim filed a complaint against that officer two weeks later and spoke with detectives.

An internal investigation began.

“This occurs anytime a complaint form against an officer or someone is brought to the chief of police or any other supervisor,” Stout said. “That form is then signed and given to the captain or lieutenant assigned. We refer to this as the Office of Professional Standards file. Then an investigator is assigned. If that investigator sees that there is a potential criminal charge that will come out of it, we have to then notify the OPS supervisor and criminal investigation unit, too. A criminal investigation is then launched.”

During an internal investigation, questions have to be answered, and refusing to answer will result in termination, Stout said. In a criminal investigation, a person is protected under Miranda Rights, and therefore, is allowed to refuse to answer questions asked by authorities.

“Information used in an internal investigation can’t be used during a criminal investigation, but anything found during a criminal investigation could be used during an internal investigation,” Stout said.

The victim reported that the officer gave her his name, but the name he had given turned out to be false, police said. Several interviews were conducted, and police searched GPS systems, radio logs and mobile video data. Investigators concluded that Stiles may have been the officer who had sexually assaulted the victim.

Stiles was then interviewed by the OPS Dec. 3.

“There were substantial holes in his story, and there were several things wrong,” Stout said. “Investigators were then called, and Stiles was relieved of duty for the remainder of his shift. The next morning, Dec. 4, Stiles was placed on administrative leave and relieved of his badge and gun, pending the internal investigation.”

It was determined during the internal investigation that Stiles had arrested the victim earlier that same night, put her in the police car, and was going to take her to Washington County Detention Center, but instead notified dispatchers that she was no longer under arrest via the computer in the vehicle, according to FPD documents. However, witnesses saw Stiles drive away from the scene with the woman still in the back of the car, according to FPD documents.

The victim informed police that she told Stiles, while in the back of the police car, that she lived alone. He then took her to the Cliffs Apartments, where she lived, and deactivated the mobile video recorder on the vehicle. It was determined Stiles was at the victim's apartment for 27 min.

Stiles was also employed as a courtesy cop for the Cliffs Apartments during that time, and therefore, had a working master key to the victim's apartment, authorities said.

After leaving the victim's apartment shortly after 1 a.m., Stiles returned to patrol duties, according to preliminary reports. However, it was determined during the investigation that Stiles had returned to the vicinity of the apartment upon two different occasions, shortly thereafter: during the second occasion is when the sexual assault allegedly occurred.

Dec. 16, after he declined to speak with detectives and take a polygraph exam, Stiles was terminated from the department for several policy violations, Stout said.

The next day, an off-duty officer was approached by a former FPD dispatcher, who reported that she was sexually assaulted by Stiles while he was on duty, according to reports. The woman reported that the assault happened sometime in July.

The woman claimed that she and Stiles had a conversation in the FPD parking lot as she left work, and he began work. As she left the parking lot, Stiles took note of her license plate number, according to reports. Based on police department records, it was determined that Stiles ran the woman's vehicle license number to find out her address.

Stiles allegedly drove by the victim's residence multiple times, before stopping shortly before 1 a.m. He approached the victim, who had just returned home, took her cell phone, looked through her private photos and began moaning, according to police documents.

After retrieving her phone, the victim turned to walk away, and was grabbed from behind and put into a hold by Stiles.

Stiles was placed under arrest Dec. 20, at the WCDC after he turned himself in. He is out of jail on a \$50,000 bond.

"We want to make sure that justice is served," Stout said. "This angers us. We have several men and women here who have dedicated their lives to law enforcement, and for one person to do that here is completely unacceptable to us."

Stiles had worked at FPD for three years, and prior to that, worked for the Rogers Police Department for one year.

"It's going to take awhile to earn the trust back of the public, but it's something we're going to strive to do," Stout said. "We want to see if there was some way that this could've been prevented, and if so, we'll take the steps to prevent this tragedy from ever happening again."

Law enforcement officials at FPD said they encourage anyone with additional information concerning Stiles to contact the investigation unit at (479) 587-3520.

“It is very possible that there could be another victim out there,” Stout said.