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## Department has also had trouble with sex scandals

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December 28, 2008 | Victoria Kim and Jack Leonard

Inglewood police officers have repeatedly been embroiled in sex-related scandals over the last five years, according to court documents, law enforcement records and interviews.

In May 2004, Officer Ron Navarreta, a 13-year veteran, was fired after FBI agents discovered that a suspect in a child pornography investigation had e-mailed explicit images to Navarreta's AOL account, according to court records. Investigators found that Navarreta's AOL account included a screen name called "PlyGRoUndObsver." An agent alleged that the screen name's user prowled the Internet seeking a relationship with a mother and daughter and listed "teaching vry yng fem students about love" as a hobby, according to internal affairs records that Navarreta's attorney included in a civil court case filed to get his job back.

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Navarreta denied receiving the images e-mailed to him by the child-porn suspect. FBI agents were unable to examine the computers he used because they had been sold or reported stolen.

An arbitrator found there was not enough evidence to prove Navarreta knowingly received child porn but concluded that he lied to the FBI and Inglewood investigators and should be fired. A judge upheld his termination.

Later that year, an anonymous letter sent to the department's Internal Affairs Bureau prompted a sexual harassment investigation of traffic Officer James Manzi.

Manzi, according to an internal affairs report included in court records, played for on-duty colleagues a videotape and an audio recording of himself having sex. Manzi was suspended for 20 days but retired on disability before the discipline was imposed. He declined to comment.

In January 2006, another officer was accused of taking a cellphone photograph of an inmate during a strip search. The officer was suspended and then fired for unrelated reasons last...

strip search. The officer was suspended and then fired for unrelated misconduct.

Police Chief Jacqueline Seabrooks said supervisors now monitor strip searches. "That's one of the circumstances where we have to be exceedingly careful because it has the potential to be interpreted as something very demeaning," she said.

In December 2006, a woman visiting from Florida claimed that an on-duty Inglewood officer raped her and forced her to perform sexual acts while he kept his hand on his holstered gun.

According to a district attorney's report, the woman was standing on a street corner wearing a miniskirt and fishnet stockings when Officers Donvey Lindsey and Brandon Beak pulled up, suspecting she was a prostitute.

The officers followed the woman back to her motel and confirmed she was a registered guest, according to the report. Lindsey then followed her to her room, telling Beak that he would check her identification, Beak told authorities.

The woman, in a statement to the FBI, claimed she complied with Lindsey's orders to perform sexual acts because he threatened to arrest her.

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Prosecutors declined to file charges, saying it would be difficult to prove the case because the woman had been arrested for prostitution in her home state. The woman has filed a federal civil rights suit against the city. The suit is pending.

Seabrooks said Lindsey has been fired. He did not return a call seeking comment.

Just two months after the rape claim, the city was shaken by allegations that other officers visited prostitutes at massage parlors. Among them was six-year veteran Officer Richard Correa. According to civil court records, a prostitute who worked at a massage parlor on La Brea Avenue told investigators that she had performed a sex act on Correa while he was on duty and in uniform. She implicated other officers who she said frequented the massage parlor for sex and promised to alert her to police raids.

Correa told internal affairs investigators that he had sex with an employee at a different massage parlor on Manchester Boulevard while in uniform, court records show. He denied paying her and said it happened only once.

"That was a bad decision on my part, and it's stupid," he told investigators. He was fired in March 2007.

A department spokesman said seven officers were fired for allegedly visiting the massage parlors or covering for officers who did.

Seabrooks said she and her predecessors have moved swiftly to rid the department of officers who commit serious misconduct. She said the 195-officer force should not be judged based on the conduct of a relative handful of officers.

"It is unfortunate that these things seemed to have plagued us," she said. "In any barrel, you're bound to find some bad apples that touch each other, and you're going to find the vast majority that are just fine."

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