

Bond reduction denied for detective in sex case

Lindsey Anderson , El Paso Times

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2017 Cop Pedophile Juan Carlos Gardea

A bond reduction was denied Monday for an El Paso police detective arrested and jailed last week on suspicion of sexually assaulting a teenage girl.

Detective Juan Carlos Gardea, 46, requested that his \$100,000 bond be reduced during a hearing Monday morning, one week after he was arrested on a charge of sexual assault of a child — allegedly a then-15-year-old family member. The girl has since turned 16. Gardea was booked into the El Paso County Jail on a \$100,000 bond.

Gardea's attorneys requested that his bond be reduced, but the motion was rejected in magistrate court Monday morning.

The incident allegedly happened Feb. 4 while Gardea, the girl and her younger brother were watching TV while lying on a bed, according to a complaint affidavit obtained by the El Paso Times. The girl told investigators with the Crimes Against Children Unit that Gardea allegedly fondled and molested her. The boy was asleep at the time, said Gardea's defense attorney, Justin Underwood.

Gardea, who has been with the El Paso Police Department for 19 years, was placed on administrative leave.

He appeared in court Monday morning in a light red-and-white striped jail jumpsuit, handcuffs on his wrists and shackles on his ankles. He stood rigidly throughout the 30-minute hearing, staring straight ahead and only moving once, to adjust his handcuffs.

Some of Gardea's relatives were present in the courtroom, sitting quietly in the last row throughout the proceedings. Underwood's brother is an El Paso County Sheriff's Office detention officer, Underwood said. He also has three sons in the military and an adult daughter who lives in El Paso, Underwood said.

Underwood said the family gathered for a Super Bowl party and to celebrate the girl and boy's birthdays on Feb. 5, the day after the alleged assault, and there didn't appear to be any issues.

But Heather Haywood, representing the state, said Gardea had made suicidal comments, apologized to the girl and allegedly threatened to kill her mother. Haywood asked for the bond to remain unchanged out of concern that Gardea could harm himself or his family.

Gardea, an Ysleta High School graduate, spent the first seven years with the Police Department on patrol Downtown and the rest working in narcotics, Underwood said.

His arrest photo has not been released.

Lindsey Anderson may be reached at 546-6345; landerson@elpasotimes.com; @l_m_anderson on Twitter.