Sex, lies: Richmond cop was fired for lying in sexually exploited teen case, newly released records show
The reason for Officer Jerred Tong’s dismissal had not been made public until now.

Richmond Police released officer disciplinary information Wednesday.

By THOMAS PEELE | tpeele@bayareanewsgroup.com, ALEX EMSLIE, KQED NEWS and DAVID DEBOLT | ddebolt@bayareanewsgroup.com | Bay Area News Group
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A Richmond Police officer swept up in a sex scandal involving a sexually exploited teen known as Celeste Guap in 2016 was fired from the force for making false statements to internal affairs investigators, and another was suspended for an unspecified period of time for having sex on duty, according to records released under a new state law.

The internal documents, obtained under the police transparency law SB 1421, revealed that Officer Jerred Tong was “untruthful during an administrative
investigation,” and Officer Terrance Jackson “engaged in (a) sexual act on duty.” No other details were released and may not be for weeks, Richmond officials said.

While the officers’ roles in the scandal have been previously reported, the exact nature of their discipline was unknown until now. City Manager Carlos Martinez and Police Chief Allwyn Brown both said that seven other officers were disciplined in the sex scandal, but their records didn’t fall under what the new law requires to be made public.

“What they were disciplined for did not meet the definition of sexual assault as defined in the statute,” Martinez said.

Richmond is the third Contra Costa County city to release records requested under the new law after a stay ordered by the First District Court of Appeal expired Tuesday. Six law enforcement unions had sought to keep the records private, arguing that the new law, which took effect Jan. 1, could not be applied to records from past years. Numerous judges around the state have disagreed. The new law requires the public release of records showing when officers are found to have committed sexual misconduct on duty, or made false statements. It also requires the release of all investigations of officer-involved shootings and other uses of force resulting in serious injury, whether or not officers were found to have violated department policies.

According to a lawsuit filed against Richmond, Jackson met the young woman, who used the alias Celeste Guap, when she attended De Anza High School, where he worked as a resource officer. While on duty, Jackson drove to her Richmond home and she went outside “wearing only a robe,” the suit alleged. The officer asked her “to show him her breasts, and when she did, he groped (her) breasts,” according to court documents. Civil rights attorney John Burris, who represented Guap, later dropped the suit.

Richmond department sources said that Jackson quietly returned to work at a graveyard shift roll call months after the sex scandal broke.

At the time of the allegations, Tong also worked as a school resource officer. Guap previously sent this news agency a text purporting to be between herself and Tong where he said he would stop by her mother’s Richmond home.

The widespread sexual exploitation case implicated more than 30 police officers in departments across the Bay Area. According to testimony in criminal cases that were were dismissed or ended in plea deals, the young woman has been a sex trafficking victim since approximately age 12. According to her testimony,
while in her late teens, she said she developed relationships with a multitude of police officers whom she generally met online.

Officers in departments including Oakland, Richmond, the Contra Costa Sheriff’s Department and Livermore were disciplined, and some briefly faced criminal charges for alleged sex with a minor and for feeding law enforcement information on prostitution stings to the young woman.

The Contra Costa District Attorney’s Office declined to file charges against any of the Richmond police officers. Only a retired Oakland police captain was charged in Contra Costa County related to the case.

Contra Costa County Supervisor John Gioia, who had called for an outside investigation, on Wednesday stood by his earlier comments in light of the new documents released by Richmond police.

“In hindsight, I stand by the comments I made then, which is the investigation should have occurred through the state attorney general’s office,” Gioia said by phone Wednesday. “Had (that) been done, we wouldn’t be having these doubts, we wouldn’t be questioning the investigation.”

The records released by Walnut Creek reveal that an officer was suspended without pay for making false statements in police reports.

Martinez released files on four police shootings and two other use-of-force cases.

In a case from May of last year, an officer threw an agitated suspect to the ground during a traffic stop, knocking him unconscious. The suspect’s passenger complained about the treatment at the stop and requested video.

But Martinez officers do not wear body cameras, and their squad cars are not equipped with video cameras, according to the police chief.

Another Martinez officer used a carotid restraint – or “sleeper hold” – on a suspect in 2017, rendering the man unconscious for several seconds, according to the records.

Of the shooting cases released by Martinez, three were non-fatal, stretching back to 1997. In another case, an officer who responded to a domestic argument between father and son fatally shot the father in 2001, after he charged his son with a pipe, according to the records. According to news reports at the time, the officer was new to the force. The shootings were found to be within department policy.

Sukey Lewis of KQED News contributed to this story.