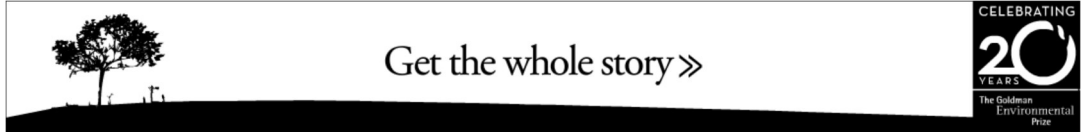


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Fired S.F. firefighter pleads not guilty to sexual assault

Henry K. Lee, Chronicle Staff Writer
Wednesday, September 10, 2008

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(09-09) 11:57 PDT SAN FRANCISCO --

A former San Francisco firefighter has pleaded not guilty to charges that he sexually assaulted a woman after showing her his badge to convince her he was harmless.

IMAGES



Fire Department / Courtesy to The Chronicle

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Horacio Candia, 48, entered not guilty pleas Monday to three counts of forced oral copulation and one count each sexual battery, making criminal threats and false imprisonment.

Judge Donna Little of San Francisco Superior Court ordered Candia held in lieu of \$500,000 bail.

Police said Candia, who was fired from the Fire Department in 2000, used a badge to pass himself off as a firefighter Aug. 22 near Market and Larkin streets when he offered to buy a 20-year-old woman a meal.

He drove her to 16th and Carolina streets, an industrial area, and prevented her from leaving, investigators said. He began masturbating and forced her to perform sex acts before she escaped, flagged down a motorist and reported the incident to officers at the Mission Police Station, authorities said.

After a police broadcast was issued, a motorcycle officer remembered that he had stopped Candia that same day for a possible traffic violation. Candia showed the officer a Fire Department badge,

authorities said.

The sexual-assault victim identified Candia in a photo lineup, authorities said.

Police say they have also interviewed prostitutes who say they have encountered Candia on the street. One of them said he showed her a badge, but that she refused to go with him, police said.

Candia was hired as a firefighter in 1992 and was promoted to the rank of chief's operator in 1997, fire officials said. He was working as a battalion chief's driver when he was fired.

Supervisors accused Candia of drinking on the job. He declined to take a urine test and said his supervisors had roughed him up and prevented him from leaving the firehouse. The Fire Commission cited his refusal to take the test as a basis for his dismissal, which Candia challenged unsuccessfully in court.

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Candia surrendered at his attorney's office Friday, three days after he failed to appear in court to be arraigned for allegedly driving under the influence in a case that was investigated by the California Highway Patrol, authorities said.

His attorney, Greg Walston, issued a statement in which he said Candia had been falsely accused. "We look forward to disproving these malicious and vexatious allegations," Walston said.

District Attorney Kamala Harris said, "This defendant was basically a wolf in sheep's clothing. Not only have his alleged actions physically and emotionally violated this victim, he also broke a public trust by masquerading as one of San Francisco's bravest."

E-mail Henry K. Lee at hlee@sfgate.com.

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I bet the motorcycle cop let this jerk go because he flashed his old badge. The law only seems to apply to some persons and not others.

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ChiPower 9/9/2008 9:05:41 AM

Well, if the allegations prove true...then all I can say is what a SCUMBAG. If found guilty, hope he is prosecuted to the full extent of the law, and gets some quality bunk time with Bubba. Jerk-offs like this should have their nads publicly severed prior to going off to serve their time. Those who prey on women and children are the lowest form of scum on the planet.

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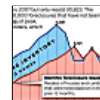


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