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Woman files \$500,000 sex claim against Rialto police

A server at Spearmint Rhino Gentlemen's Club says officers used department's offices and police union hall for sex.

By Richard Winton, Los Angeles Times

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Rialto police officers had group sex with employees of the Spearmint Rhino Gentlemen's Club at the police narcotics office and the police union headquarters, according to a claim filed against the Inland Empire city.

Nancy Holtgreve, a server at the club, says that more than two officers engaged in sexual conduct with strip club employees, and that one officer used the department's narcotics office for sexual liaisons during the last two years. Her relationship with one officer soured when she got pregnant, she alleges, and the officer began threatening her.

The claim filed Monday alleges that the behavior "fostered and perpetuated a culture of unwanted sexual harassment of females by male police officers."

"This sexual behavior happened on duty and off duty," Danuta Tuszynska, Holtgreve's attorney, said Friday. "I have a picture of an officer exposing himself in his uniform ... I don't know how the chief and bosses couldn't know about it in such a small department."

Tuszynska declined to make her client available for an interview.

Police Chief Mark Kling said the department has been investigating the allegations since they were reported May 5.

"I've placed four officers on administrative leave and two others are under investigation," he said, adding that he hoped to complete the inquiry this month.

City Atty. Jimmy Gutierrez said Holtgreve's claim will be rejected by the city as untimely and without merit because the acts were consensual. "She claimed she had consensual sex with two men.... She had a child with one of the men," he said. "She did not file any police reports with the city or city she lives in alleging she was threatened."

The allegations come five years after the Police Department of this diverse city was nearly disbanded amid allegations of racism and sexism.

Holtgreve, 37, alleges that the misconduct began in 2008 when officers started hanging out in the Spearmint Rhino, then arranged to rendezvous at a nearby Denny's. Officer James Dobbs started taking her to the union hall of the Rialto Police Benefit Assn. for sex, according to the \$500,000 claim, a required precursor to a lawsuit against a government agency

"Occasionally several employees of the Rhino and several officers would engage in sexual relations at the union together," according to the claim. She also alleged that Dobbs introduced her to a narcotics officer who had sexual relations with her at the department narcotics office.

Holtgreve became pregnant by Dobbs and had a child last March, according to the claim.

Holtgreve alleges that during the pregnancy he began to "intimidate and threaten" her with calls and texts, stating in one message, "I'm going to make you look like an unfit mother, you ruined my life.... I'm a cop" and "You should have had an abortion."

According to the claim, the officer also "physically abused" Holtgreve on several occasions.

The claim said she went to the Rialto Police Department in late April and spoke to internal affairs, Holtgreve alleged. Holtgreve said she spoke to Kling, who she claims apologized for the circumstances and said, "We'll protect you Nancy, please don't take it to the press."

Kling denies having said this.

Dobbs could not be reached for comment.