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Singer Rick James Remains in Custody in New Assault Case

By Julio Moran

Singer Rick James, who with his girlfriend is already facing charges of sexually assaulting a woman, remained in custody Tuesday in lieu of \$750,000 bail after surrendering to authorities on new charges that he and his girlfriend recently assaulted a second woman.

James, 44, who was free on \$50,000 bail in the first case, and his girlfriend, Tanya Anne Hijazi, 22, are accused of assaulting a 34-year-old West Hollywood woman Nov. 3 after she joined the couple in a hotel room at the St. James's Club in West Hollywood to take drugs, said Deputy Dist. Atty. Myron Jenkins.

Jenkins said that Hijazi came out of the bathroom wearing only her underwear, and then James and Hijazi "punched, beat and choked" the woman. The three moved to another room on another floor after other hotel guests complained about noise.

James and Hijazi are charged with two counts of assault with deadly weapons--his fists--causing great bodily injury, false imprisonment, kidnaping and sale or transportation of cocaine. A preliminary hearing is scheduled for Dec. 24 in San Fernando Municipal Court. They face maximum sentences of more than 14 years on the new charges.

James, whose real name is James Ambrose Johnson, lives in the Hollywood Hills above Studio City. He is best known for his 1981 hit "Super Freak," and is often referred to as the "King of Funk."

Bail for James was set at \$250,000 on the new charges. However, earlier in the day, after hearing of James' arrest in the second case, San Fernando Superior Court Judge Howard J. Schwab increased James' bail in the first case from \$50,000 to \$500,000, for a total of \$750,000.

Hijazi, who was free on her own recognizance, is also in custody in lieu of \$500,000 bail. She is scheduled to be arraigned today.

At James' arraignment Tuesday, his attorney, Anthony P. Brooklier, said James denies the allegations. Brooklier said that he has spoken with hotel security guards and that "many of the facts are disputed."

"I'm sure we're going to see a civil filing like in the other case," Brooklier said, referring to a \$15-million civil lawsuit filed against James by the alleged victim in the first incident, which occurred July 16, 1991.

In that case, James and Hijazi are charged with aggravated mayhem, assault with a deadly weapon, torture, false imprisonment and forced oral copulation. Trial is scheduled to begin Jan. 19 in Van Nuys Superior Court. They face life imprisonment if convicted on all charges.

The woman testified at a preliminary hearing that she lived at James' house with him and Hijazi for about a week, taking cocaine almost nonstop. The woman said she had consented to have sex with him on at least two occasions before the alleged incident.

However, the woman testified that James became angry one night and accused her of stealing some of his cocaine. She said he ordered her to undress, tied her to a chair, and beat her and burned her legs and stomach with a heated cocaine pipe and a kitchen knife.

She said he then forced her to have sex with his girlfriend while he watched, and then all three had sex.

James and Hijazi deny the allegations, and accuse the woman of seeking publicity and money from James.