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Hartford Police Investigating Three Of Their Own In Beating Of Prisoner

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The Hartford Courant

November 9, 2009

HARTFORD

Police are investigating three of their own after a prisoner was beaten Nov. 1.

Police Chief Daryl K. Roberts said that the investigation began Thursday, shortly after police commanders learned of the assault, which was captured on the department's video monitoring system.

Three officers are under investigation in connection with the incident. Roberts said he would not identify the officers because an internal investigation is underway and because the officers are entitled to the presumption of innocence.

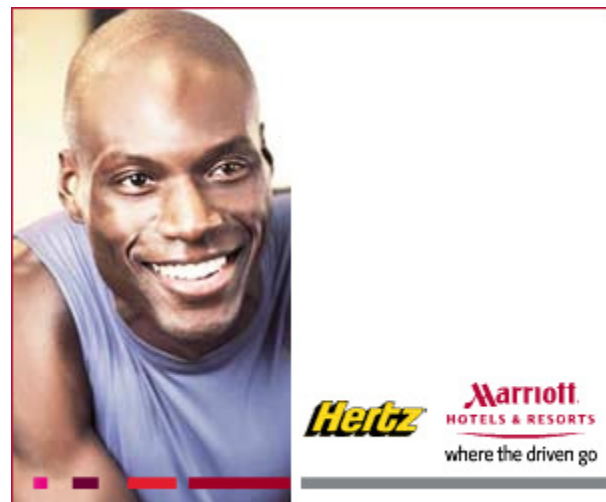
Police sources said that Officers Rhashim Campbell and Kent Lee are under investigation for allegedly beating the prisoner and that Lt. Kevin Ahlquist is under investigation because he was overseeing the booking area on the morning of the assault, although Ahlquist is not accused of assaulting the prisoner.

Police commanders learned about the assault after a supervisor overheard one of the officers talking about it. An internal affairs investigation then began.

"Once it was brought to our attention, we initiated an immediate investigation," Roberts said Sunday night. "We didn't wait for a complaint to come in."

The incident occurred about 2:30 a.m. when a prisoner, who has not been identified, struck one of the officers. Sources identified that officer as Campbell. He and Lee then allegedly assaulted the prisoner, the sources said.

Roberts said that the officers under investigation have been suspended while the investigation continues. The supervisor has not been suspended. Should criminal charges be appropriate,



investigators will apply for arrest warrants, he said.

"It may rise to a criminal event," Roberts said. "We're going to apply for a warrant if the information takes us in that direction."

Roberts said the department's officers have worked hard to gain the public's confidence and incidents such as the one being investigated undermine those efforts.

"In order for us to maintain the public trust, we have to be trustworthy," Roberts said. "We work very hard to try to serve the public as professionally as possible."

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