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San Diego to pay \$5.9 million to woman assaulted by officer

BY TONY PERRY

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The city of San Diego has agreed to a \$5.9 million settlement with a woman who was sexually assaulted by a police officer after a traffic stop, officials announced Thursday.

The victim, identified only as Jane Doe, was assaulted by Anthony Arevalos, 44, an 18-year veteran of the Police Department. Arevalos was convicted in 2011 of demanding sexual favors from seven women after traffic stops.

Jane Doe “was the courageous victim whose report of Arevalos’ misconduct led to his arrest and conviction,” according to a joint statement released at a news conference by City Atty. Jan Goldsmith, Police Chief Shelley Zimmerman, Jane Doe’s attorneys Browne Greene, Linda Workman and Joseph Dicks, and the attorney for the city’s insurance carrier, Mitch Dean.

The settlement, the statement said, is meant as compensation for the “long term emotional and psychological injuries” suffered by Jane Doe, who is in her mid-30s.

Before the Jane Doe settlement, the City Council approved a total of \$2.3 million in payments to a dozen women assaulted by Arevalos. The Jane Doe settlement was approved by the City Council in closed session.

Arevalos’ pattern, prosecutors said during his criminal trial, was to stop women in the Gaslamp District entertainment zone on suspicion of drunk driving and then offer to make a “trade” for not arresting them.

Arevalos was fired after charges were brought. He was sentenced to eight years and eight months in prison in 2012.



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Former San Diego Police Officer Anthony Arevalos cries as he reads a statement in court in San Diego in 2012. The city settled Thursday with one of his victims for \$5.9 million.

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Of the \$5.9 million, about \$3 million will be for attorneys' fees and court costs incurred by Jane Doe's attorneys, according to the statement. Of the \$5.9 million, about \$5.7 million will be paid by the city's insurance carrier, and the remaining \$200,000 by the city, officials said.

Of all the civil lawsuits and claims involving Arevalos, only the Jane Doe case continued to trial. But before the case went to a federal court jury, the two sides reached a settlement.

The woman alleged that she allowed Arevalos to assault her in the bathroom of a 7-Eleven market in exchange for him not arresting her.

She said the assault occurred March 8, 2011. She filed a report the next day with the Police Department. Arevalos was arrested on March 11, 2011.

In the wake of the Arevalos case, and other alleged misconduct by San Diego police officers, the mayor, police chief and City Council this year requested that the U.S. Department of Justice perform an [audit](#) of the Police Department's hiring, supervision and internal affairs practices. The audit is underway.

Mayor Kevin Faulconer, elected in February to succeed Bob Filner, has said the audit is needed to restore trust in the Police Department that may have been eroded by instances of misconduct by officers.

Zimmerman said Arevalos "brought shame upon our Police Department."

"It is our hope that Jane Doe, who was courageous to come forward, can now put this behind her and focus her efforts on her healing," Zimmerman said. "And we are glad we can put this behind us so we can focus on our future as we rebuild our Police Department."

As mayor-elect, Faulconer's first move was to name Zimmerman, a 31-year veteran of the department, as chief, succeeding William Lansdowne, who retired after being chief since 2003.

Zimmerman has promised a hard-nosed approach toward allegations of misconduct by officers. She has restored the professional standards unit in the department and supported the issuance of body cameras for officers.

"All parties recognize that this was important and hard-fought litigation, but also recognize that it is time to move forward with reform efforts," according to the joint statement.

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