

Jury Deadlocks on Lewd Photo Charges against Cop



(New York- AP, November 26, 2005) - - A judge has declared a mistrial after a jury deadlocked in the case of a police detective accused of taking lewd photographs of two women, including one who is the daughter of David Bowie's ex-wife.

Prosecutors said Detective Richard Vecchio, 40, snapped 15 sexually explicit pictures of the rock star's 25-year-old former stepdaughter while she was being treated at a Staten Island hospital for an alleged rape.

He was also accused, in a separate incident, of photographing a young woman's tattoos and pierced breast in a jail cell after she had been arrested on a traffic charge.

After the mistrial ruling Friday, prosecutors said they would retry Vecchio on the misconduct charges, which are misdemeanors and would be unlikely to carry a hefty jail term if he were convicted.

Vecchio maintained his innocence.

During the trial, he testified that the woman in the rape case gave him the photographs in an attempt to seduce him. The pictures, which prosecutors said were found in Vecchio's police precinct locker along with a bottle of whisky and a pornographic magazine, appear to show the woman smiling and posing.

Vecchio acknowledged taking some Polaroids of the woman at the hospital, but said she was clothed in a hospital gown. He acknowledged photographing the other woman's tattoos, but said he did not act illegally.

"Naturally we are disappointed he was not acquitted, but we are gratified he was not convicted," Vecchio's lawyer, Joseph LaMattina, told the New York Daily News. "We feel he'll be vindicated next time."

An attorney for one of the women, Jason Leventhal Jr., said he regretted that the jury "wasn't given the complete picture of who Detective Vecchio is."

"His abuse of power and perverted behavior has disgraced the NYPD and violated the rights of our clients," Leventhal said.

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