

False rape charges may lead to expulsion of West Point cadet

By Dana Scott
Associated Press

WEST POINT, N.Y. — A recommendation to expel a woman from West Point who was accused of twice bringing unfounded rape charges will "have a chilling effect on any female cadet at the academy," her lawyer said.

An Army investigator recommended Tuesday that Su Jin Collier, 19, be expelled from the military academy for lying and having consensual sex with a cadet while on campus, both violations of school regulations.

The recommendation came after the investigator found Collier guilty of charges at an administrative hearing. He also recommended suspension for the male cadet, who was found guilty of having consensual sex while on campus. The length of the suspension was not specified.

"Cadet Collier was raped on November 13, 1996, and she was raped again today by this institution," her attorney, Alen Beerman, told reporters. "Su Jin started this in order to expose the conditions here at West Point."

Collier, a second-year cadet from El Paso, Texas, plans to pursue criminal charges of rape, assault and conduct unbecoming an officer against the man, her lawyer said.

She was dismayed but not surprised at the findings, and issued a statement through Beerman.

"I must do this. It (rape) goes on every day. I have to make it better for the people who come after me," Beerman quoted her as saying.

As a freshman in 1995, Collier said she was raped by a sophomore cadet, although she admitted they had previously had consensual sex. An investigation concluded the rape charge was unfounded.

In the 1996 case that led to the charges against her, she said she had a "friendly relationship" with

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Su Jin Collier in a statement given by her attorney

another male cadet, which was romantic at first but never went as far as sex. She said the relationship ended in May 1996, but he began stalking her, then lured her to his barracks that November and raped her.

The investigation concluded she had lied in the second case when she said she had not had sex with the cadet in the past.

The reason Collier received a harsher penalty than the man was not because she had claimed she was raped, academy spokesperson Capt. John Cornelio said Wednesday. Her case was different because the academy ruled that Collier had lied to investigators, Cornelio said.

The recommendations must be approved by the academy's superintendent and the Department of the Army. Collier can stay at school until the process is complete, at least through the end of the school year, Cornelio said.

Regardless of the outcome of her case, Collier plans to complete the school year but will not return in the fall, Beerman said.

In an unrelated charge that was brought in the civilian courts, a male cadet was cleared in January of a rape allegation made by a female cadet after a May 1996 party in New Jersey.

In Maryland on Tuesday, a military jury convicted a former Army drill instructor of raping six trainees. Staff Sgt. Delmar Simpson could get life in prison for his conviction on 18 of 19 rape counts.