

Officers to face disciplinary hearing

07/26/01

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Two Metro police sergeants who appeared on a videotape to be kicking and striking a suspect for about eight seconds while he was down on the ground will face a disciplinary hearing Tuesday.

Central Patrol Sergeants David Imhof and Jeffrey Sanders Jr. have been charged with using excessive force on Alonzo Holbert, 35.

The charges stemmed from an internal investigation resulting from a videotape made on the morning of June 6 by a WTVF-Channel 5 photographer.

The tape seemed to show Sanders and Imhof punching, kicking and striking Holbert with a baton.

The man had just been arrested after wrecking a car at a gas station at 801 Jefferson St., forcing his way inside a nearby BP store and assaulting a *Tennessean* delivery person, police said.

Holbert was arrested, handcuffed behind his back and placed in the back of a patrol car. However, he managed to get his hands in front of him and kicked out the rear window of the police cruiser, officers said.

Sanders saw Holbert and "ran to the car and ordered Mr. Holbert to get back in the car, but the suspect continued to exit the vehicle," according to Imhof's charge letter. Imhof got hold of Holbert, however, Sanders swung his baton and accidentally hit Imhof, causing him to lose his grasp on the man, according to the letter.

Imhof and Sanders then chased Holbert about 200 yards and the suspect "tripped, fell or decided to surrender," according to the charge letter. The police department charges that Holbert was surrendering when he went down and did not attempt to move, making the two officers out of line when they struck him.

Imhof's lawyer said Holbert was trying to get away and that the two sergeants were just trying to stop him.

"He was not surrendering, and in fact was trying to get back up and the officers were trying to keep him from getting back up because they had already tried to stop him earlier and were unable to do so," attorney David Raybin said.

Raybin also maintains that because a wall is blocking the view of Holbert in the video, it is impossible to see what he is doing when Sanders and Imhof reach him.

"This man had broken out of a police car and both of the police officers were unable to stop him from breaking out of a car and could not subdue him at the police car," Raybin said.

Neither Sanders nor his attorney could be reached for comment.