

Lawsuit Claims Cops Searched Woman's Vagina for 11 Minutes

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Charneshia Corley. Photo courtesy of ABC News. [/caption]

Summary: A Texas woman claims police officers violated the law by giving her a cavity search without a warrant.

In 2015, a 20-year-old Texas woman was pulled over for allegedly running a stop sign, and the routine traffic stop became one of invasion. According to a lawsuit filed in Harris County, police officers vaginally searched Charneshia Corley for 11 minutes after pulling her over, and she is now suing.

"They're supposed to protect you. They're supposed to keep you safe — not rape you, and that's how I feel," Corley told KPRC. "I feel like I was raped."

Deputies claimed to have smelled marijuana in Corley's car but found none in the vehicle, she said. Then the officers took their search to a new level and did a cavity examination on the young woman, according to *CBS News*.

While marijuana has become legalized in many states across the country, it is still illegal in Texas.

A police dashcam video released on Monday shows a cuffed Corley being thrown to the ground by a female officer. While the vaginal search was not clearly visible on the tape, Corley said that the officers took off her pants, spread her legs, and searched her vagina for drugs. This all occurred in a convenience store parking lot.

In the graphic video, Corley can be seen on the ground with her legs open while two female cops stand and kneel over her. A male police officer is nearby but his back is to the scene.

"And she tells me just bend over — I hesitate. When she shines her light on me, and she proceeds to stick her fingers toward my vaginal area, I immediately pop up like, 'Ma'am what are you doing?'" Corley told *KTTLA*.

Corley was arrested and charged with possession of marijuana after .02 ounces of weed were found inside her body. The charges were dropped, according to her lawsuit.

Last year, two of the cops involved in the search were indicted on charges of mistreating Corley on the job. The officers were expected to go on trial on August 7th, but the charges were dropped recently because prosecutors wanted to present new evidence, according to Harris County District Attorney's Office Civil Rights Division Chief Natasha Sinclair. The new evidence was shown to a second grand jury, who declined to indict the officers.

"No one in this office stands by the search the way it was conducted. No one condones that. No one thinks it's appropriate. It should not have happened," Sinclair told KRIV. "However bad decisions, bad judgment may not rise the level of a criminal offense."

In the first case, if the officers had been found guilty, they would have faced a fine and up to one year in prison.

Corley is represented by attorney Sam Cammack, who filed her civil lawsuit against the county in August 2016. Cammack argued the officers violated Corley's rights "by conducting an unreasonable and illegal strip search and an unreasonable and illegal manual body cavity search prior to arresting Ms. Corley, without a warrant and without any probable cause."

Corley's trial is set for January 2018 and she is seeking \$15 million in damages.

Harris County Sheriff's Office said that the officers involved with Corley's search are still employed and that the office "prohibits deputies from conducting strip searches without a warrant. In cases in which a warrant is obtained, strip searches must be conducted in a private, sanitary, and appropriate facility."

Months after Corley's invasive search, the state passed a law prohibiting warrantless body cavity searches.

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What do you think of Corley's case? Let us know in the comments below.

