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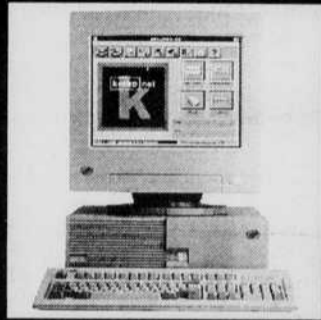
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Irvin's lawyer: Protect names

■ **COWBOYS:** Lawyer Royce West said the names of suspects in rape cases should not be released

The Associated Press

DALLAS — The names of suspects in rape cases should be protected like those who lodge such complaints, the lawyer for Dallas Cowboys star Michael Irvin said Sunday.

Royce West's remarks came two days after police cleared his client, saying a woman's rape allegations involving Irvin and teammate Erik Williams were unfounded.

"I believe that just like the victim of a sexual assault's name should not be released, I don't believe that the suspect's name should be released until such time as that person has been formally charged," West said during an appearance on "Good Morning America Sunday."

Nina Shahravan, a former topless dancer, filed a police report Dec. 30, accusing Irvin of holding a gun to her head while Williams and a third man who was never identified raped her in Williams' home the night before.

Irvin and Williams denied the allegations and were never charged.

A police source told The Associated Press that Shahravan signed a confession recanting the allegations.

A woman who answered the telephone at Shahravan's parents' house Sunday hung up after declining to identify herself.

Police said they were considering charges of filing a false police report against Shahravan, but no action had been taken by Sunday afternoon. If convicted, she could face up to six months in jail and a \$2,000 fine.

West called Shahravan a "pathological liar" whose accusa-

tions could have a chilling effect on other women who may allege rape by a celebrity.

"I think the first thing that people will say is that 'Uh oh, here we go again, here's another rush to judgment, and the credibility of the victim, who may very well have been the victim of the assault, will very well be questioned, and very well scrutinized,'" he said.

Lawyers for the players have criticized police handling of the investigation, taking particular aim at an impromptu news conference Dec. 31 that police said was necessitated by an onslaught of media requests.

Before going to police, Shahravan told her story to a local television reporter, who sent her to the police, then confirmed the allegations and aired them.

Police spokesman Ed Spencer said Sunday the department is comfortable with how it handled the case, including releasing the suspect names on the police report — a decades-old policy.

"Our intention from the first day was to do it as we would any other investigation," Spencer said. "We also made every effort to follow our policies in terms of being accountable to the public in terms of the press by providing the information that we could on this, that includes both our comments and the public record documents that we provided."

But Williams' attorney, Peter Ginsberg, said police took too long to publicly announce that there were doubts about Ms. Shahravan's story.

"Within the first day or two of the investigation, the police had the opportunity to analyze the evidence which had been seized and to talk with people who both knew that Michael Irvin had not come to

Erik's house and was elsewhere," he said by telephone from his home in Washington, D.C.

Ginsberg said investigators also had analyzed evidence that "irrefutably showed that there had been no drug use" within days of the complaint's filing.

He said a civil rights lawsuit against the police department was among the actions Williams is considering.

"We have closed off no options," he said.

Police chief Ben Click declined an interview request from the AP. But he told *The Dallas Morning News*, "The issue of the complainant originally going to a member of the media made it more difficult for us to try to manage the information."

West said Sunday on NBC's "Today" program that police initially "jumped the gun."

"Thanks to chief Ben Click here, they were able to right that course and the investigation did, in fact, have integrity built back into it," he added.

West also criticized the media for "a rush to judgment."

Irvin has urged the press to use the same aggressiveness in reporting the outcome as it did in reporting the allegations.

"Rerun it, rewrite it, reprint it," he said. "Just like you did, with the same intensity that you did — the same intensity. Don't lose the intensity. Don't lose the intensity."

West said he hoped the story would be carried on a day when it receives more widespread attention. Police announced the findings of their investigation late Friday.

"I would hope that this is the lead story next week on some of the major newscasts such as yourself and in some of the major media in terms of newspapers and radios next week," West said.

Bowl alliance setup to be reviewed

■ **NCAA FOOTBALL:** New Board of Directors will take close look at bowl system

The Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — The NCAA's Board of Directors has its first mission — take a closer look at the bowl system.

With a new governing system set for approval Monday at the NCAA Convention, the newly created 15-member board will review the bowl alliance setup and recommend any changes. For now, a playoff is not a top priority.

"There's a lot of concern about the bowl alliance and whether or not it was fair to some teams," Maryland president William Kirwan said Sunday after the Presi-

dent's Commission was briefed on the NCAA's role in Division I-A postseason play.

"I think there is an idea there that should work for us. Maybe we need to make some refinements in the selection process. But I feel the alliance concept is one that respects the existing structure, yet still gives the likely possibility of providing a contest between the No. 1 and No. 2 ranked teams to determine the national championship."

The biggest concern this season was the exclusion of WAC champion Brigham Young from a top-tier alliance game and the absence of Wyoming from the bowl scene altogether. WAC commissioner Karl Benson, with approval from his council of presidents, last week asked the board to look for a

more equitable method of conducting the postseason, including a playoff. And the board listened.

"If the board can exert influence on the alliance, that would be a start," said Benson, who last week rejected an alliance proposal to make four conferences signatory members and include them in limited revenue-sharing.

Buzz Shaw, chancellor of Syracuse and chairman of the Board of Directors, said if the WAC hadn't come forward and stated its case during the weekend, the subject probably would not have been dealt with so quickly.

The board hasn't totally rejected a playoff, but Sam Smith, chairman of the President's Committee and president of Washington State, said, "I do not see it was one of the leading options."

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