

Gov aide's accuser in meeting with DA

By BILL SANDERSON

Investigators in the Bronx District Attorney's Office yesterday interviewed the woman whose domestic-violence allegations against a top adviser to Gov. Paterson led several of his top aides to quit and forced him to drop his re-election campaign.

Sherr'Una Booker, who says state troopers and Paterson himself urged her to abandon her claim, spent about two hours with investigators from DA Robert Johnson's domestic-violence bureau, a spokesman for the district attorney said.

"She's walking into this building not because she necessarily wants to but because she must do so in order to stand up for her rights and the rights of all women who have been victims of domestic violence," said her lawyer, Kenneth Thompson.

Booker's original claim was dismissed in February, when she skipped a court hearing one day after Paterson called her to discuss the matter.

Booker telegraphed plans to renew her assault claim in an interview aired on WNBC/Channel 4 earlier this week in which she said she told the truth last year when she accused David Johnson of assaulting her on Halloween night.



SCANDAL: Paterson aide David Johnson was suspended over ex-girlfriend Sherr'Una Booker's accusations that he attacked her.

"It's not OK for someone to be fearful. It's just not OK," Booker said. "Speak up. Stand up."

Alerted by the TV appearance, Johnson's lawyer fired off a letter to the Bronx DA stating that the allegations had no merit.

Cops who investigated Booker's initial complaint "made a reasoned determination that no crime was committed," said the lawyer, Oscar Michelen.

He said that cops called to the couple's Bronx apartment declined to arrest Johnson and that Booker described the incident as a "verbal dispute."

"The police came. They inves-

tigated. It was open, shut, closed," Michelen said in an interview. "We just feel there is no basis or need to reopen the case at this point."

Johnson remains suspended from his job without pay.

Former state Court of Appeals Chief Justice Judith Kaye is leading a probe by the state Attorney General's Office into Paterson's handling of the case. Investigators working on Kaye's probe interviewed Paterson several weeks ago.

Whether Booker's allegations are proved in court, Paterson's handling of the incident was

such a disaster that it led to widespread calls for his resignation and sank his re-election campaign after just one week.

On Nov. 2, three days after the incident, Booker told a judge in Bronx Family Court that she had problems calling the police "because the state troopers kept calling and harassing me to drop the charges and I wouldn't."

Booker followed up by appearing at several subsequent court hearings — though she never had Johnson formally served with an order of protection.

Paterson allegedly called Booker on Feb. 7. She skipped a court hearing the next day.

Paterson's handling of the case led to the resignation of several top state officials, including the state police superintendent and first deputy superintendent and the state's deputy secretary for public safety.

Paterson's director of communications quit amid the Booker case and another scandal, involving Paterson's acceptance of World Series tickets last year.

Communications Director Peter Kauffmann said he resigned because, as a former naval officer, "integrity and commitment to public service are values I take seriously."

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