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## Court official temporarily blocks release of key video in assault case against SPD officer

In a ruling Monday, a court commissioner found that Seattle police Officer Chris Hairston would be harmed if patrol-car video were disclosed to the news media before he can argue it shouldn't be made public at this stage of the case.

By [Steve Miletich](#)

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Officer Chris Hairston

A King County court commissioner on Monday temporarily blocked the release of patrol-car video considered to be key evidence in an assault case brought against a Seattle police officer.

Commissioner Pro Tem Eric Watness ruled that the dashboard-camera video should not be disclosed to the news media until a King County Superior Court judge hears arguments May 30 on whether the recording should be released.

The King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office had planned to release the video to The Seattle Times and KOMO-TV early this week in response to public-disclosure requests.

Officer Chris Hairston's attorney's [filed court papers](#) seeking to block the release at this stage of the case.

Hairston has pleaded not guilty to a [misdemeanor assault charge](#) stemming from a Sept. 24 incident in which his wife, Katie, who also is a Seattle police officer, responded with another officer to a report that a person had passed out near Seattle Central Community College.

While dealing with several people who had been drinking alcohol, Katie Hairston was assaulted.

When Chris Hairston arrived, he is alleged to have assaulted the handcuffed suspect. A Seattle police report said Hairston could be seen on the video forcefully using his hands on the man.

Hairston was charged by the City Attorney's Office, which has declined to release the video.

The Times and KOMO-TV requested the video from the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office, which obtained an assault conviction against the suspect in the attack on Katie Hairston.

Attorneys for Chris Hairston, in seeking an injunction to block the release of the video, argued that disclosure would violate Hairston's right to privacy and jeopardize his right to a fair trial.

They also asserted that releasing the video would conflict with a state law regarding the release of dashboard-camera video while criminal or civil litigation is pending — a law that is currently before the state Supreme Court in another case.

The county Prosecuting Attorney's Office argued the video was subject to public disclosure and that Hairston wasn't likely to prevail on the merits.

Watness ruled Hairston would be harmed if the video were released before the issues could be fully argued.

The Seattle Police Officers' Guild has sharply criticized City Attorney Pete Holmes for charging Hairston, saying Hairston simply grabbed the suspect and that his conduct should be handled internally by the Police Department.

Prior to Hairston's request, the guild's president, Sgt. Rich O'Neill, questioned why Holmes had not released the video.

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*Information from Seattle Times archives is included in this story.*