

Liar, Liar Pants On Fire...Not!



After Giovanni Ramirez was arrested in the beating of Bryan Stow, his attorney, Anthony Brooklier, hired a former FBI polygraph expert, Jack Trimarco, to examine his client. Under questioning by Trimarco, Ramirez insisted he didn't like baseball and had never been to Dodger Stadium. Trimarco pressed him, asking what area of a ballpark he would consider team property. Restrooms? "Yeah," Ramirez said. "What about the bullpen?" Trimarco asked. "What's a bullpen?" Ramirez responded. **Read more** on San Jose Mercury [News.com](#) Trimarco walked away convinced that Ramirez had nothing to with the attack on Stow. Trimarco will join Bill Carroll today to talk about polygraph tests. You can find out about him on [JackTrimarco.com](#)

Herhold: The cost of a bad arrest

By Scott Herhold
[Mercury News Columnist](#)

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The suspects now: Marvin Norwood and Louie Sanchez

After Giovanni Ramirez was arrested by Los Angeles police in the savage beating of Santa Clara County paramedic Bryan Stow at Dodger Stadium, his attorney, Anthony Brooklier, hired a former FBI polygraph expert, Jack Trimarco, to examine his client.

Under questioning by Trimarco, Ramirez insisted he didn't like baseball and had never been to Dodger Stadium. Trimarco pressed him, asking what area of a ballpark he would consider team property. Restrooms? "Yeah," Ramirez said. "What about the bullpen?" Trimarco asked.

"What's a bullpen?" Ramirez responded, according to the Los Angeles Times. To police and poker players, this is known as a verbal tell. Trimarco walked away convinced that Ramirez had nothing to with the attack on Stow.

For two months, however, Los Angeles Police Chief Charlie Beck continued to insist the cops had the right guy. Then, last Friday, as police arrested two other men, he conceded that Ramirez was no longer a suspect.

In one of the more fatuous quotes uttered by a police chief, Beck said, "In policing, it's just as important to exonerate the innocent as it is to implicate the guilty."

Put on a lie detector, Beck might have said, "In policing, it's just as important to keep the public at bay as to have the right guy. Nobody's gonna weep tears over that guy, anyway."

Almost right after Ramirez's arrest in May, you began to hear credible doubts. Nothing in phone records, financial transactions, or stadium surveillance tied him to the crime.

Prosecutors declined to file charges, though he was jailed on a parole violation after a gun was found in the house where he was staying.

Inside the LAPD, Beck was wrestling with his own political problems. He had initially assigned the case to detectives in the Northeast division, where the crime occurred.

But as the case against Ramirez weakened, the chief handed it to the LAPD's more experienced robbery-homicide team, which began the investigation anew even as Beck was saying publicly that Ramirez was their man.

The robbery-homicide team focused on two fans who witnesses said had been acting obnoxiously during the game. That led to the arrests last week of Louie Sanchez, 29, and Marvin Norwood, 30, both of Rialto. A woman who had reportedly been with them, Dorene Sanchez, was arrested and released.

According to the Times, the investigators got a key tip from a child (unlike newspaper reporters, who are cautioned about quoting kids on anything tricky without consulting parents, cops can sweet-talk children).

The problem isn't that the cops made a mistake. It was no shame that Ramirez went back to prison after investigators found a gun.

The problem lies with the credibility of the chief, who insisted they had the right guy even after it was clear Ramirez wasn't a valid suspect. (Insiders say witness identifications were weak).

I understand there are times when investigators engage in misdirection. Having the chief vouch for Ramirez's arrest probably put the real suspects at ease.

The problem, in a sense, is a political one. When cops are caught out with untruths like this, there's always a cost, a suspicion that the next guys they caught aren't right, either.

And that's probably unfair, because the robbery-homicide team did a superlative job here.

Charlie Beck had better pray there are no problems with the current charges. In a crime as sensational as this, he doesn't get a third strike.