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LOCAL NEWS

Former SAPD officer accused of kneeling on suspect's neck criminally charged

Michael Brewer charged with unlawful restraint

Fares Sabawi, Digital Journalist

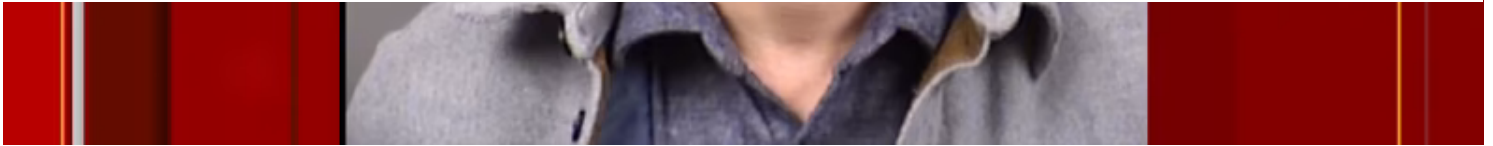
Dillon Collier, Investigative Reporter

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Tags: **SAPD, San Antonio, Crime, Crime Crackdown**





Michael Brewer, a former SAPD officer, is charged with unlawful restraint. (KSAT)



SAN ANTONIO – A San Antonio police officer who was fired after kneeling on a suspect's neck is now facing criminal charges, court records confirm.

Michael Brewer, who **was fired in 2020** along with Officer Andre Vargas, was indicted by a Bexar County grand jury on Tuesday. He is charged with unlawful restraint, a third-degree felony.

On Nov. 26, 2019, the officers responded to a disturbance call at Commercial Avenue and Grosvenor Boulevard.

A witness told police she saw Matthew Anthony Garza argue with a woman over their child, according to preliminary information provided by the police department. The department declined to release the official police report because it involved a minor, officials said. Garza was later arrested by officers and charged with evading arrest.

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The woman told police Garza followed her and the child when she tried walking away from him. The woman and child were able to get into a witness' car and waited in the car until police arrived.



One of the officers blocked Garza with his car and drew his firearm, ordering Garza out of the vehicle and onto the ground, according to the preliminary information. The officers said Garza approached them with his hands raised “and did not comply with orders.”

When Vargas ordered Garza to place his hands behind his back he “released the taser trigger,” according to the police department.

Garza told police he “needed to catch his breath” after the taser was deployed on him and he was taken into custody. Police said while officers searched him, Garza “continued to act aggressively and began yelling again,” according to the preliminary information.

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“To prevent (Garza) from kicking or resisting, (Garza) was pushed up against the patrol car” so officers could search the car, police said. The officers found a substance they believed to be marijuana, along with a marijuana grinder and a smoking pipe.

In January 2020, Garza filed a complaint about his arrest.

After reviewing the incident, investigators found that Vargas used unnecessary force by lifting Garza off the ground by his arms even though he was already handcuffed, according to the disciplinary record. They also determined his use of the stun gun “far exceeded the reasonable force necessary to accomplish the arrest,” according to disciplinary records.



provide no resistance," according to his termination paperwork.

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Court records showed Garza was granted deferred adjudication for the evading arrest charge and given two years of probation.

It was not immediately clear why Vargas was not also criminally charged in the incident.

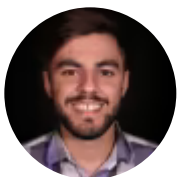
If convicted, Brewer faces 10 years in prison and a possible fine of up to \$10,000.

Read more:

- [San Antonio police officer fired after kneeling on suspect's neck: records](#)
- [After firing 4 officers for excessive force, San Antonio police chief asks for FBI review](#)

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS:



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Fares Sabawi has been a journalist in San Antonio for four years. He has covered several topics, but specializes in crime, courts, open records and data visualization.



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Emmy-award winning reporter Dillon Collier joined the KSAT 12 Defenders in 2016. Dillon's investigative stories air weeknights on the Nightbeat. He provides restaurant health reports for KSAT's "Behind the Kitchen Door." Dillon is a two-time Houston Press Club Journalist of the Year and a Texas Associated Press Broadcasters Reporter of the Year.

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