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New York Mets pitcher Jeurys Familia arrested on domestic violence charge

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Jeurys Familia, the New York Mets' All-Star closer who was recently featured in a new ad campaign for an anti-domestic violence organization, was arrested on a domestic violence charge this week, according to a complaint filed by authorities in Fort Lee municipal court.

Police said in the complaint that Familia caused "bodily injury to another" and that they observed a scratch to the chest and a bruise to the right cheek of the victim, whose name was redacted in the court papers provided to The Record on Tuesday.

"The matter was brought to our attention and we are monitoring the situation," the Mets said in a brief statement on Tuesday. It is likely Familia will be disciplined by Major League Baseball for the alleged incident, even if charges are eventually dropped.

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Familia, 27, who is identified in the complaint as Jeurys F. Mojica, was charged with simple assault, a disorderly persons offense, according to the complaint. A Facebook page that appears to belong to Familia uses the name Jeurys Familia Mojica to identify him. The date of birth on the complaint matches the date of birth given for Familia on the Mets' website.

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The alleged incident took place in Fort Lee on Monday, according to the complaint. Fort Lee Police Chief Keith Bendul had declined to provide details on Monday when he was asked about the alleged incident, saying only that police officers had responded to an apartment on Park Avenue at 2:22 a.m. Monday morning after being called about "a dispute." He did not identify the parties involved or specify whether charges had been filed.

The complaint had not been filed with the judiciary by the time the court closed on Monday but was available on Tuesday. Police officers said in the complaint that they found probable cause "to believe that domestic violence had occurred."

Even if Familia is not convicted, he will likely face punishment from Major League Baseball in 2017. Mets infielder Jose Reyes received a 51-game suspension to start the 2016 season after he was arrested and charged with assaulting his wife in Maui in October 2016. Charges were eventually dropped, but MLB placed him on unpaid leave and ultimately suspended him. The Rockies released Reyes upon his reinstatement and he signed with the Mets in June.

And Chicago Cubs closer Aroldis Chapman was assessed a 30-game suspension after police were summoned to his Davie, Fla. home for an alleged incident involving Chapman and his pregnant girlfriend. Chapman was not arrested or charged in the incident, but a police report alleged that he struck and choked his girlfriend at a family birthday party. Police allege Chapman also fired eight gunshots in his garage after the sequence. Cristina Barnea, Chapman's girlfriend, eventually told police she did not wish to prosecute Chapman.

Chapman was traded from the Cincinnati Reds to the New York Yankees after the incident, and joined the Cubs in a July trade.

Familia was living with his wife, Bianca, and their 1-year-old son, Jeurys Jr., in a Fort Lee apartment, according to previously published reports. He was the Mets' top relief pitcher and a member of the National League All-Star team this year, and was part of an ad campaign that began last month featuring local professional sports celebrities condemning domestic violence.

A native of the Dominican Republic, Familia spoke in Spanish on the video, saying he was a fan of baseball and of the Mets, and adding: "I am not a fan of domestic violence."

The campaign is sponsored by the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence and includes videos by New York Yankees manager Joe Giardi, New York Liberty center Kiah Stokes and former city sports stars John Starks of the Knicks and Rod Gilbert of the Rangers. New York City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito helped to coordinate the campaign.

He was the star of the Mets relief pitching staff, and was the team's closer, typically inserted at the end of games to maintain slim leads. He famously pitched on the day his son was born in 2015, helping the Mets to hold onto a lead against the Atlanta Braves at Citi Field in New York.

While he was selected to be on the National League All-Star team roster this year, he did not pitch in the All-Star game. Last month, he gave up a three-run home run to Conor Gillaspie in the ninth inning to take the loss in a 3-0 Wild Card Game loss to the Giants.

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