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## **A mysterious powder and a miscarriage prompt investigation of restaurateur**

**LAPD investigators have been trying to determine whether Joshua Woodward intentionally gave his pregnant girlfriend a drug used to induce early term abortions.**

By Andrew Blankstein

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The mystery of the white powdery substance began in October, when Los Angeles Police Department officers got a call from the girlfriend of a prominent restaurateur.

The woman told detectives she had become suspicious after Joshua Woodward, the investor behind restaurants across the country, including Table 8, allegedly rubbed a white powder on her. Soon after coming in contact with the powder, she spontaneously aborted her 13-week-old fetus.

A week later, police arrived at her Los Angeles apartment, where they allegedly found Woodward grinding a white substance in his hands.

Over the last six months, detectives have been trying to determine whether Woodward, who authorities believe impregnated the woman, intentionally gave the woman a drug that caused her to miscarry. His attorneys have vigorously denied the accusation.




But this week, the case took a new twist. LAPD officials say lab tests have confirmed that the substance they found in Woodward's hands was misoprostol, which is used to induce labor as well as in early term abortions. Tests continue on another powder that was found in the woman's apartment after she miscarried.

LAPD Capt. Fabian E. Lizarraga, commanding officer of the juvenile division, said investigators were still conducting "an active investigation" and hoped to present their findings to the L.A. County district attorney's office soon. In October, police arrested Woodward on suspicion of homicide but released him after determining that more time was needed on the investigation.

Woodward's attorneys, Mark Werksman and Mitchell Edgars, said they don't think police have a case and are suspicious of any lab test results.

"The testing is ongoing, and no results have been released, nor should they be until the test results are final," Werksman said. "We question whether the information is accurate. They are making giant leaps

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here that are unsubstantiated by the facts, and there is a lot more to this case than just analyzing what the substances are that were found on any person or in any place."

Woodward, of Chicago, is a well-known figure in restaurant circles, having invested in high-end eateries in New York and L.A.

Investigators have not released the name of the woman at the center of the case. Police got involved in October when she came to detectives after having a miscarriage. She told detectives she was suspicious at "how and what had happened," Lizarraga said.

Malcolm Potts, a UC Berkeley embryologist and an obstetrician-gynecologist, said misoprostol has been used to save lives of women around the globe by reducing bleeding during childbirth. The drug also can cause a woman to abort within 24 to 48 hours after it is absorbed. Symptoms can include cramping, bleeding and chills.

Potts said he has heard of cases in which men had used it to induce abortions in their wives and girlfriends.

Werksman said police have no evidence their client tried to abort the fetus.

"We are convinced that Joshua Woodward is innocent of the allegations that were made, and we have serious doubts as to whether the police or the district attorney's office will go forward with this case."

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