

Possible clue in Hyatt case

Police seek to tie uniform parts, attack

Pieces of security guard uniforms discovered outside the Hyatt Regency Chicago on June 23 may help solve the mystery surrounding two recent attacks on women in the hotel, police said Tuesday.

Police Supt. Matt Rodriguez disclosed the potential evidence as he laid plans for a seminar with downtown hotels to discuss the latest in security technology.

"The uniform parts will prove significant only if we can establish that they were used by the offender," he said. "We don't know that yet. These are only potential leads."

Hyatt officials have said they believe the two assaults are unrelated. Rodriguez said that determination.

Mayor Daley denied that the city's Hyatt priority investigation has anything to do with next month's Democratic National

Convention. The Hyatt is scheduled to house several state delegations and serve as the party's headquarters hotel during convention week, Aug. 26-29.

"Crimes have nothing to do with the convention. I just want to point that out to the press," Daley said.

"These are serious crimes that unfortunately took place in this hotel. But we have huge conventions that come. Our convention industry is a major industry in Chicago. You have two unfortunate incidents. You can't downplay it."

On June 28, a 15-year-old New Jersey girl was found beaten in her fourth-floor hotel room with a belt wrapped tightly around her neck.

The second attack occurred Sunday night, Hyatt security guard Jennifer Madden, 24,

suffered a neck injury when someone apparently tried to choke her with a clothes hanger in a stairway between the Hyatt's 18th and 19th floors.

Police said neither victim was robbed or sexually assaulted.

A stairway fire door was removed by police from near the spot where Madden was attacked, and fingerprints on it will be compared with prints found in the girl's room, investigators said.

On Tuesday, police led Madden on a walk-through at the Hyatt in an effort to jar her memory. In earlier interviews, she was unable to provide a description of her assailant, but she said it was a man. She has told police she was approached from behind and could not get a good look at the man, who could not be described because of the absence of a description.

makes police suspicious of the security guard's story, Rodriguez said. "That would be a good question if she was a police officer of many years, but I don't know how well trained she was. . . . Let's just say it was very fortunate on the part of the offender exactly the way that incident went down."

Police have so far been unable to question the first victim, who underwent facial surgery Monday and remains at Northwestern Memorial Hospital.

The security seminar for downtown hotels that will house convention delegates is expected to be held in about 10 days.

Meanwhile, the Hyatt has hired a number of off-duty Chicago police officers, but Allan Farwell, Hyatt general manager, declined to say how many.

"We have dramatically enhanced the security presence both from a technological and a manpower standpoint," Farwell said.

Contributing: Jim Casey and Phillip J. Connor

