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# Salem police lieutenant accused of rape

By Matt Stout

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A veteran Salem cop is off the job after a woman accused him of raping her while she watched their kids playing in a pool last month — allegations his lawyer said he “adamantly” denies.

Lt. Matthew Desmond, 41, turned himself in to Salem police this morning and went before a Salem District Court judge, who ordered him held on \$5,000 cash bail. Desmond has been on paid administrative leave since June 26, shortly after Salem police began their investigation, said Capt. Brian Gilligan.

Desmond’s lawyer, Tom Drechsler, said he expects his client to post the money, after which he was ordered to stay away from the alleged victim.



The accusations stem from an alleged June 20 incident at Desmond’s Salem home when authorities say he “digitally raped” a female acquaintance while she watched both his and her children play in his pool. But Drechsler said the woman “initiated any contact that occurred” and months prior “had come on” to his client.

“The documents I’ve seen indicated that she delayed for a long period of time (going to police), and she told several different stories,” Drechsler said. “He’s very adamant any contact they had has been initiated by her. I’m very confident he will be exonerated.”

Both Desmond and the alleged victim are married, Drechsler said.

“It’s not a great day for the department,” Gilligan said. He said he did not know if Desmond, a 15-year veteran of the force, had any past disciplinary issues with Salem police, though Drechsler said his client has an “impeccable record.”

Desmond is due back in court Aug. 15.

— matthew.stout@bostonherald.com

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