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Demopolis police officer fired after being charged with rape

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TUSCALOOSA (AP) — A Demopolis police officer has been fired after he was arrested and charged with three counts of rape, officials said Tuesday.

Demopolis Public Safety Director Jeff Manuel said Terrance Lavelle Smith, 30, is accused of having sex with an underage female on three separate occasions.

One of the incidents that led to the charges is alleged to have happened while Smith was on duty, Manuel told The Tuscaloosa News in a story for today's editions.

He's been a good officer and it was quite shocking, to be honest with you, said Manuel, who has worked with Smith since 1999.

Manuel received a complaint alleging Smith's misconduct and turned the investigation over to Marengo County Sheriff Jesse Langley.

Based on the seriousness of the charges, I asked the sheriff's department to investigate the criminal side of it while we investigated the internal aspect of it, Manuel said.

Langley could not be reached for comment Tuesday, and jailers said they did not have access to the Marengo County Jail's logbook Tuesday.

Smith's attorney, Walter Griess of Eutaw, could not be

reached for comment.

Manuel said Smith was released from jail on bail, but he did not have access to records that would indicate the amount.

◆ Allegedly, it was consenting, but because of the person's age, it doesn't matter, ◆ Manuel said.

Manuel placed Smith on administrative leave Dec. 16 and fired him on Dec. 20.

An internal investigation revealed that Smith had violated the department's policies and procedures, which played a role in the dismissal.

The policies and procedures that he violated are related to the crime he is accused of, Manuel said.

Smith, a patrolman, can appeal his firing to the city of Demopolis's personnel committee. No other officers have been implicated in the criminal or internal investigations, Manuel said.

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