

## Norwalk cop has sex assault arrest dropped

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### 2014 Cop pedophile Anthony Santo

A Norwalk police officer suspended for the past five five years without pay since he was arrested by Greenwich police for sexually assaulting his best friend's daughter, had his charges dismissed by a Stamford judge Monday

Anthony Santo, 46, an 18-year member of the police department before his suspension in 2009, walked out of the court room and said it was a little too early to say if he would get his job back.

"I'm glad it is over," the former Norwalk Eagle Scout and EMS medic said of the dismissal of the charge being dropped against him.

Santo's defense attorney John Williams said he would be addressing Santo's job as a police officer very soon.

"I will be taking further steps in the immediate future to resolve all of the injuries he has had to endure all these many years. It would be good for the citizens of Norwalk if this dedicated officer were to assume his duties. I hope that can be done," Williams said.

At the hearing, Maureen Ornowsky told Judge Gary White that while preparing to take Santo to trial for a second time this month –the first ended in a mistrial in September 2012- the state's star witness and Santo's alleged victim told her that she would not testify against him again. At Santo's first trial the girl, who said Santo was like a second father to her, was a willing and forceful witness for the prosecution. It was another's testimony –an expert witness- that resulted in the mistrial.

Ornowsky said at a meeting with the victim in the Stamford State's Attorneys office in late September, the girl was emotionally upset and distraught about testifying again. Ornowsky said the girl told her that she had panic attacks and emotional outbursts at the thought of going through another trial.

"It is not the state's habit to force sex assault victims to testify, especially one that is so upset," Ornowsky said to White.

Furthermore she said at the last trial the presiding judge ruled against her on presenting evidence that showed prior sexual misconduct on Santo's part with at least one other young woman as well as putting evidence to the jury demonstrating that Santo was conscious of his guilt.

Those rulings considerably weakened the state's case against Santo, Ornowsky said.

In October 2009, Santo was charged with felony counts of second-degree sexual assault and risk

of injury to a minor after the daughter of his best friend in Greenwich told police that he put his hands under her pants and groped her sometime in 2003.

While on the witness stand at age 20 the victim said she was about 13 at the time when Santo put his hands up her pants and touched her sexually.

She said was in her pajamas sitting on a couch in her living room and she and Santo may have been talking about masturbation or being groped by another boy when Santo touched her. She said she did not tell anyone about the incident until she confided in her boyfriend about the incident in 2007.

Just before the girl and Santo were to take a trip together to Florida to visit a relative of Santo's in July 2009, the boyfriend called police and reported the sexual assault she described to him more than a year earlier.

In hopes of resolving the case following the mistrial, Ornowsky substituted charges last September, effectively dropping the sexual assault charge. The change was made when it looked as though Santo would be participating in a court diversionary program for first offenders that would clear his record if he successfully completed a probationary period lasting up to two years without getting into any trouble. Santo ended up not signing up for the program, but that left only the risk of injury charge against Santo.

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