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# Ex-Deputy Charged With Lewd Acts With A Child

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in [News, Woodstock](#)

**By Eric Francis**

*Standard Correspondent*

WHITE RIVER JUNCTION – A former Woodstock police officer and the once second-highest ranking member of the Windsor County Sheriff's Department has been charged with lewd and lascivious conduct with a child as the result of an investigation into allegations of misconduct with two teenage girls that surfaced this summer.

Richard "Rick" Kelley, 55, of Pawlet pleaded innocent to the single felony count on Tuesday in Windsor County's criminal court but Vermont Assistant Attorney General Cindy Maguire also indicated to the court that a second similar count is expected to be filed in the coming weeks.

Kelley, who faces a mandatory minimum of two years in jail and a potential maximum of up to 15 years for each count if he were to be convicted, was ordered not to leave Vermont while his case is pending.

Looking strained at times, Kelley stood silently behind the defense table Tuesday afternoon next to his attorney in Windsor District Court just a couple of feet from where he'd often been posted throughout the years in his deputy's uniform keeping track of prisoners that were being brought before the bench.

The four-page affidavit filed by Vermont State Police Detective Daniel Elliott laid out a half-dozen alleged instances of what one of the girls described as “inappropriate stuff” that Kelley had allegedly done or suggested to the girls over the years escalating to alleged instances of fondling in 2009.

“It’s unfortunate. I don’t like it when things like this happen,” said Windsor County Sheriff Mike Chamberlain, who did not actually hire Kelley but who said he had every reason to trust and promote Kelley clear up to the rank of Captain over the past 13 years.

“(Kelley) was brought on under the Bill Heinz administration. He came on in 1997, which was just prior to when I came back as Sheriff,” Chamberlain recalled. “From then up until October he was pretty much employed by us but there were two different times that he went to work for the Woodstock Police Department.”

Prior to becoming a sheriff’s deputy, Kelley had also worked at times for the Rutland City Police Department and as a correction’s officer, Chamberlain noted.

“We had no problems with him. No complaints,” Chamberlain said. “He did his job, and did a good job, and that’s obviously why I brought him up to the position he was in.”

Chamberlain said that he never had any reason to suspect Kelley of doing anything untoward involving children. “I did not. I have to be careful what I say because it’s a personnel matter, but I did not,” Chamberlain noted.

Chamberlain first learned in July that the state police had launched a probe into possible sexual misconduct on Kelley’s part and at that point the Sheriff placed Kelley on administrative leave. “It was quite surprising. I think it surprised a lot of people,” Chamberlain said, adding, “I don’t like situations like this but we do what we gotta do.”

Chamberlain said that Kelley remained on leave with the department until he abruptly resigned on October 30, 2010, noting, “He just came in and presented me with his letter that he was resigning and I accepted.”

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