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Suspended Old Forge police captain to stand trial on sex abuse charges

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Jake Danna Stevens / Staff Photographer
Suspended Old Forge police Capt. Jamie Krenitsky, center, leaves the Lackawanna County Administration Building on Tuesday after his hearing on sexual assault charges involving a girl who was 15 at the time.

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Magisterial District Judge Sean McGraw ordered an Old Forge police captain to stand trial on charges he sexually assaulted a 15-year-old girl in 2005.

After two days of testimony that included a graphic account of the alleged sexual encounters from the now 23-year-old victim, Judge McGraw bound over Capt. Jamie Krenitsky, 34, on all four sexual assault charges to Lackawanna County Court for a possible jury trial.

After the preliminary hearing in Scranton, Deputy District Attorney Jennifer McCambridge said the victim has not wavered from the account she provided investigators in May of her alleged five-month sexual relationship with the suspended police captain.

"She has been crystal clear since day one," Miss McCambridge said, countering claims by Capt. Krenitsky's attorney, Jason Mattioli, that the victim's story of their relationship was false.

The victim also told investigators she had sexual relations with suspended Old Forge Police Chief Larry Semenza, 48, and ex-borough firefighter Walter Chiavacci, 46, when she was underage. In May, state police arrested and charged Chief Semenza and Mr. Chiavacci for sexually assaulting her from 2004 through 2007.

The sex probe has drawn the attention of the FBI, although the basis of their investigation is not known. Chief Semenza is a target, county prosecutors said.

On June 27, the victim testified on the first day of the two-day-long preliminary hearing, which continued Tuesday. She provided lurid details of their sexual encounters at the borough volunteer Fire Department, which is next to the police station and government offices.

The Times-Tribune does not identify victims of sexual abuse.

Capt. Krenitsky maintains his innocence.

Tuesday's continuation of the hearing began with the testimony of Cpl. Benjamin Clark, a state trooper who was one of several investigators on the case.

Cpl. Clark testified that Capt. Krenitsky admitted - in an interview at the county district attorney's office the same day investigators first spoke to the victim about the allegations - that she performed oral sex on him.

The interview with Capt. Krenitsky happened hours after investigators set up a recorded phone call between him and the victim, in which he allegedly admitted to engaging in consensual sexual activity with her and apologized to her about it, county Detective Chris Kolcharno testified.

Later that night, in a written statement, he admitted only to kissing her, Cpl. Clark testified.

Sobbing frequently on the stand for nearly two hours last week, the victim testified she performed oral sex on him roughly eight times and he performed oral sex on her roughly three times in a tiny bunk room at the borough Fire Department over several months.

The alleged sexual relationship began sometime in January or February 2005 when she was 15 years old, she testified. She was a junior member of the volunteer Fire Department when they struck up a friendship, which ultimately turned sexual, she testified.

Capt. Krenitsky was wearing his police gun belt and badge when he unzipped his pants and "pulled them down to his knees," she testified.

The victim testified their sexual relationship was consensual, and it ended abruptly.

There were no witnesses, nor was any DNA collected, investigators testified.

At Tuesday's hearing, Mr. Mattioli asked Judge McGraw to dismiss two of the four charges state police filed against Capt. Krenitsky - felony involuntary deviate sexual intercourse and misdemeanor indecent assault.

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Both charges are tied to having sexual encounters with a person under 16 years old and carry lengthy prison sentences.

Mr. Mattioli contends investigators and police cannot prove that the alleged sexual assault happened before her 16th birthday.

"The dates are all over the place," Mr. Mattioli said after the hearing. "The stories are all over the place."

The judge denied his request and bound over all of the charges to county court, including one felony count of unlawful contact with a minor and one misdemeanor count of corruption of minors.

Mr. Mattioli has also questioned why the victim waited seven years to tell investigators about her relationship with the suspended captain and why she retained a civil attorney, Matt Slocum of Scranton, in November - before she went to the DA's office and told her story in May.

Capt. Krenitsky remains free on \$25,000 bail. He did not testify.

Contact the writer: smcconnell@timeshamrock.com, [@smcconnellTT](https://twitter.com/smcconnellTT) on Twitter

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