

Ex-deputy found dead on day molestation trial was to begin

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A former Clayton County deputy accused of child molestation was found dead of an apparent suicide Monday morning after he failed to show up for his trial, according to police.

Phillip Emanuel Richards, then 42, was arrested in March for allegedly assaulting a 13-year-old girl, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution previously reported. The girl told police she awoke to find Richards attacking her so she ran, climbing out of a window and running for help.

Richards' trial was to begin Monday morning, according to the Clayton County Superior Court docket. He was charged with aggravated child molestation, child molestation, aggravated sodomy and sexual battery, court records showed. He was out of jail on bond.

Police were called Monday morning to Richards' home, where he was found dead, Jonesboro police Chief Franklin Allen told The AJC.

Richards' death is an active investigation, Allen said. But "every indication" is that Richards committed suicide, Allen said.

— Please return for updates.