

Ex-Maine State Police chief indicted in child sex assault | The Portland Press Herald / Maine Sunday Telegram

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A former Maine State Police chief who recently admitted to having sexual contact with a 4-year-old relative now faces a new elevated charge after being indicted by a Cumberland County grand jury.



Handout photo

Andrew Demers Jr.



Handout photo

Capt. Andrew Demers, Maine State Police. Published in 1986 and 1987.

Andrew Demers Jr., 73, of New Gloucester was initially charged with unlawful sexual contact upon his arrest on March 17. The grand jury indicted him on that charge, a Class B felony, and added the more serious charge of gross sexual assault, a Class A felony punishable by up to 30 years in prison.

The indictment announced Friday by the Cumberland County District Attorney's Office included no new information other than that

the offenses allegedly occurred between Feb. 14 and March 14. The clerk's office at the Cumberland County Courthouse in Portland had yet to create a case file for Demers by the end of the day Friday.

Demers tried to take his own life shortly before the sex abuse investigation got under way. While being interviewed at the hospital afterward, Demers made a full confession of what he had done, according to the Cumberland County Sheriff's Office.

No court date has been set for Demers to be arraigned. He remains free on \$5,000 cash bail posted after his arrest.

State police received a tip about the alleged crimes on March 10 and referred it to District Attorney Stephanie Anderson, who asked the sheriff's office to investigate.

The District Attorney's Office and his attorney, Walter McKee, arranged for Demers to turn

himself in at the jail.

NO STRANGER TO CONTROVERSY

Demers, named a Legendary Trooper in 2003, served 26 years with the state police and held the department's top position from 1987 to 1993, when he retired. But his career wasn't without controversy.

In 1991, he was criticized for appearing in a TV ad in support of widening the Maine Turnpike, the subject of a statewide referendum that fall. Despite an outcry by opponents, the Attorney General's Office determined there was nothing wrong with his appearance in the ad.

The next year, state police came under fire for failing to pursue allegations that the founder of the Cole Farms Restaurant in Gray had molested several boys in the 1970s.

After state police dismissed the allegations, saying they were too old, the accuser turned to the District Attorney's Office, which then charged Warren Cole with sexually molesting a young boy in 1986 and 1987. Cole was sent to prison in 1992.

State police were accused of failing to pursue the case because of their close relationship with Cole, who hosted dinners for troopers at his restaurant.

State police also were scrutinized for an incident in which a trooper shot a friend of his former wife a few months after he came close to killing himself with a shotgun. The trooper said his supervisors knew about his near-suicide. Demers wouldn't say why he didn't take the trooper off the job, citing confidentiality regarding personnel matters.

Also in 1992, a state trooper and Somerset County sheriff's deputies were criticized for storming the cabin of a woman and shooting her to death after spending 10 minutes negotiating with her. Demers said there were no grounds for disciplining the officers.

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