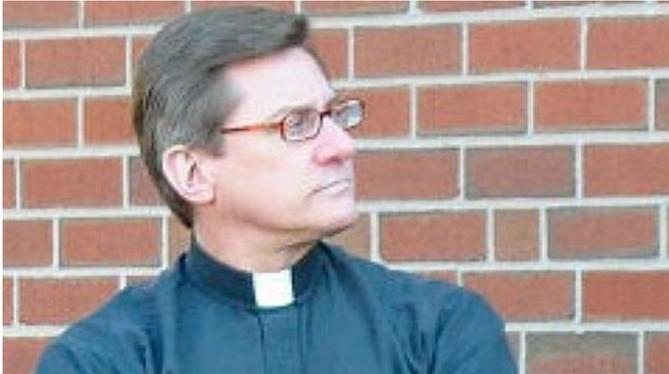


CONNECTICUT: Suspended priest Paul Gotta charged with sexual assault

Written by Associated Press
Tuesday, 01 April 2014 15:33

{lang: 'en-GB'}

Rev Gotta, previously accused of giving guns and explosives to a juvenile, now arrested on allegations he assaulted a minor



A suspended Roman Catholic priest who is accused of giving guns and explosives to a juvenile has been arrested on allegations he sexually assaulted a minor.

East Windsor police arrested the Rev Paul Gotta on Monday on seven sexual assault charges, including two felony counts and five misdemeanor counts. Police say the assaults occurred over the span of about a year beginning in January 2012. No other details of the allegations were released.

Gotta is being held on \$100,000 bail. His lawyer, Moira Buckley, declined to comment on Tuesday.

Gotta was administrator of St Philip and St Catherine churches in East Windsor when the Archdiocese of Hartford suspended him last year after the sexual assault allegations surfaced.

The archdiocese said in a statement Monday that Gotta will remain on administrative leave until the criminal charges are resolved. The statement also said the archdiocese is committed to keeping children safe.

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"We offer our prayers for all concerned in this matter and for all who have suffered the effects of sexual abuse in our society," the statement said. "We also pray that truth, justice and healing will be served for everyone involved in this case."

Gotta came to the attention of federal authorities last year when he reported that a high school student had firearms and explosives and had made threats against people at his school and against Gotta, whom he knew from church. The teen was arrested and later pleaded guilty to possessing illegal gun silencers.

Gotta himself was arrested in July and was indicted by a grand jury on federal firearms charges in January. Authorities say he also obstructed justice by telling federal agents that the juvenile made the threats "when, in fact, Gotta himself was directly involved in the firearms and explosives he was reporting."

Authorities allege Gotta gave about two pounds of explosives to a person under 21 years old not named in the indictment, helped a juvenile buy a handgun in Arizona, helped a juvenile get another handgun, helped a juvenile obtain thousands of rounds of ammunition and aided in the attempted manufacture of a pipe bomb.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/apr/01/suspended-connecticut-priest-charged-with-sexual-assault>