

Teen held on rape charge

■ Lawyer calls investigation 'inadequate'

By **JOHN WHARTON**
Staff writer

A judge ordered Monday that a 16-year-old Great Mills boy be held in custody without bond on charges that he raped and committed other sexual offenses last weekend with a 12-year-old girl.

John K. Edison Jr. is accused in charging papers of pulling the girl into his bedroom last Saturday and forcibly removing her pants, before he had intercourse with her and engaged in an additional sexual act.

The girl told police that the suspect also struck her with a belt after raping her, according to a statement of probable cause filed by detective William Raddatz of the St. Mary's Bureau of Criminal Investigations.

Edison, charged as an adult, gave law officers "several variations" in his account of what happened, court papers state, including that he fondled the girl and was "playing" when he struck her with the belt.

At a court hearing on Monday, defense lawyer Kevin McDevitt said the teenager maintains his innocence to the charges, which include second-degree rape and a second-degree sexual offense. "He is not either a flight risk or danger to the community," McDevitt said. "The case is based on an inadequate investigation."

The lawyer noted that Edison's family was seated in the courtroom, and that they would ensure that he stayed at

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home until his trial.

St. Mary's District Judge John F. Slade III asked a prosecutor if he thought the teenager's pre-trial release would pose a danger to the community.

"Based on the facts of the case, we do," St. Mary's Assistant State's Attorney Michael Kane replied.

McDevitt reiterated that the matter had not been fully investigated. "There are several witnesses that have yet to be inter-

viewed," the defense lawyer said. If that process was completed, he said, "this case would not be here today."

The lawyer asked that the case be transferred to juvenile court. The judge scheduled another hearing for next month.

A court commissioner originally ordered Saturday that Edison be held in lieu of \$200,000 bond on the charges, which also include misdemeanor counts of a fourth-degree sexual offense and second-degree assault.

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