

Appendix 8:

News articles about teachers (and one foster mum) on antidepressants engaging in sex with students.

1. Erica DePalo, former N.J. teacher, avoids prison on sex charge with 15-year-old — (Crimesider)

By Crimesider Staff CBS News

April 30, 2013, 12:30 PM

CBS/AP) Newark, N.J. - A former "teacher of the year" who admitted having sex with a 15-year-old male student in 2011 will avoid serving time in prison as information surfaced Monday about her mental health.

Erica DePalo was charged in 2012 with aggravated sexual assault and could have faced 10 years in prison if convicted. Under terms of her plea agreement, she received a three-year suspended sentence and will be subject to lifetime parole supervision. She will also have to forfeit her teaching certificate and register as a sex offender.

The 33-year-old said in court, "I apologize to those who were indirectly or directly affected by my conduct."

The former teacher pleaded guilty in February to child endangerment and admitted having a relationship with the boy, who was in her honors English class at West Orange High School in central New Jersey.

During Monday's hearing there were revelations that DePalo suffered from depression and anxiety since she was in college and had been diagnosed with bipolar disorder several years ago. According to her defense attorney, Anthony Alfano, after her arrest DePalo discovered she was mistakenly **prescribed with anti-depressants instead of mood stabilizers. He added, "the drugs contributed to her errors in judgment."**

Assistant prosecutor Tony Gutierrez supported the plea agreement saying "The intent was a fair resolution based on the facts. This was done with the consent of the (student's) family."

The judge said he was convinced that "all parties here are anxious for the healing process to begin."

DePalo could still serve time in prison if she does not abide by the terms of her parole.

By Sarah Sacheli, Postmedia News

2. Teacher found not criminally responsible for sex with teen student — (Vancouver Sun)

By Lori Coolican, Postmedia News

February 4, 2011

A Saskatchewan teacher has been found not criminally responsible for having sex with a 15-year-old former student.

Photograph by: Joe Raedle, Getty Images

SASKATOON - Family and supporters of a teacher from Shell Lake, Sask., sighed with relief in a Saskatoon courtroom Friday after a judge declared her not criminally responsible, due to mental illness, for a sexual relationship with a 15-year-old former student.

Michelle Francoeur was in an extreme "manic state" and lacked the capacity to make rational decisions when she agreed to have sex with the teen boy on several occasions between Sept. 1 and Nov. 20, 2008, Queen's Bench Justice Duane Koch found.

"The criminal law does not want to punish people who were suffering a mental disorder at the time of the act," Crown prosecutor Mitch Piche said outside court.

Francoeur was charged with sexual touching, sexual exploitation and sexual assault against the teen, whose identity is protected by a publication ban, after RCMP received a complaint in December 2008.

She was suspended from her job at the Shell Lake school while the case was before the court.

According to a statement of facts agreed upon by the Crown and defence, during the summer of 2008 Francoeur was mistakenly diagnosed with major depression and prescribed an anti-depressant drug known as Effexor. During the next few months, she underwent a radical change.

Francoeur actually has bipolar disorder rather than depression - and Effexor is known to escalate the "manic" phase experienced by people with bipolarism, which is characterized by extreme feelings of elation, euphoria, racing thoughts, inability to sleep and difficulty appreciating consequences, court heard.

Although she had previously been a very light drinker, Francoeur started using alcohol excessively, Piche told court. She spent money in careless ways, went days without sleep and ate irregularly, losing significant amounts of weight. She talked excessively and took uncharacteristic shortcuts in caring for her daughters, who were five and seven years old.

The changes concerned her family members, who sent a letter to Francoeur's doctor about the situation.

The boy had been in Francoeur's class the previous school year, but no longer attended the school where she taught. They had exchanged text messages once that summer and one night in October he sent her a flirtatious text that resulted in their first sexual encounter, Piche said.

Several more incidents followed, until the boy's mother discovered the situation.

Defence lawyer Aaron Fox noted Franceour would likely not have been charged with a crime had the incidents happened six months earlier, before changes to the Criminal Code raised the legal age of consent for sexual activity from 14 to 16.

Shell Lake is 175 kilometres north of Saskatoon.

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3. Ont. mom smoked pot, had sex with 14-year-old foster son — (Canada.com)

June 13, 2011

An Ontario woman is headed to jail after she was sentenced for having sex with a minor - a boy in her foster care.

WINDSOR, Ont. - She was his foster mom and was supposed to treat him as she would a child of her own.

Instead, she plied him with marijuana and alcohol to get him to "open up."

Then she had sex with him.

The woman was sentenced Monday to 12 months in jail, followed by three years' probation, for having sex with a 14-year-old boy placed in her care. The sexual relationship went on for two months until her husband caught her and the boy in the act and went to police.

"This was a very serious offence," said Superior Court Justice Renee Pomerance in sentencing the woman. The woman, who was 45 at the time of the offence, "grossly abused the trust placed in her."

Pomerance spoke of the "unique vulnerabilities" of foster children in general, and this boy, specifically. His sister had committed suicide and neither he nor his biological mother were coping well with their grief.

In her victim impact statement in court Monday, the boy's mother said she turned to the Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Society for help. Workers there convinced her to voluntarily sign over custody of her son on a temporary basis.

The boy was placed in a foster home in Kingsville, Ont., in 2008 with a couple who had fostered other children in the past. The couple smoked marijuana and drank alcohol with the boy to help him open up to them.

On Dec. 3, the three were drinking and smoking pot. The husband left the room and the boy attempted to kiss his foster mom. Later that night, as the woman slept in a spare bedroom, the boy made sexual advances toward her and she had intercourse with him.

It is irrelevant who initiated the sexual relationship, said deputy Crown attorney Walter Costa.

"She was the adult. She had to say no. She had the obligation, the duty, to raise him as if she were his mother."

Defence lawyer Laura Joy said the woman married at 16 and had four children of her own by the time she was 20. When the 14-year-old boy was placed in her care, the woman was suffering from depression, in part because her own children had grown and left home.

Joy presented the court with a binder full of letters attesting to the woman's good character. But one letter, described by Costa as having been written by the woman's daughter, raised a red flag. The letter appeared to blame the boy, saying he was not a "victim" because he knows "how to get what he wants."

Costa said the letter expresses an opinion that might be held by society in general - that somehow it's OK for adult women to have sex with teenage boys. "That's the kind of thinking this court has to denounce . . . that this is a kid who somehow enjoyed this."

Costa said it's true that "a 14-year-old boy is naturally curious about sex." But the woman was supposed to "protect" the boy, Costa said, not indulge him.

At 14, the boy was too young to consent to sex, much less to having sex with someone in a position of trust.

The foster mother, who is not being named to protect the identity of the boy, pleaded guilty to sexual assault. The judge saw the guilty plea as a sign of the woman's remorse.

The boy's biological mother took the witness stand to tell the court how the offence has affected her son and herself.

Since his short experience in foster care, the boy has had criminal dealings with the courts. Once an "excellent student in school," he has since failed every class he's taken.

The mom said she had concerns about her son's care while in the foster home. She refinanced her home to fight the Children's Aid Society in court to undo the custody order she had signed. The foster mother "lied" to the CAS about the boy's condition to keep him in her care, the woman said.

When the boy went into care, the mom told him to trust her.

"He trusted me as his mother," she said. "I am tortured every day."

In addition to jail and probation, the foster mother will be on the national sex offender registry. Police will also take a sample of her blood for their national DNA databank of convicted criminals.

The judge ordered the woman, as a condition of her probation, to abstain from non-medically prescribed drugs and alcohol. **Court heard that the woman takes Prozac for depression.**

4. Teacher allegedly made vodka drinks and had sex with two boys, student testifies — (Dayton Daily News)

By Denise G. Callahan, Staff Writer

Updated 1:28 PM Monday, October 24, 2011

LEBANON - A former Mason High School football player Monday recounted two occasions when he and a friend allegedly had sexual intercourse with former gym teacher Stacy Schuler in her Springboro home.

Schuler's trial started today in Warren County Common Pleas Court. She waived her right to a jury last week and has pleaded not guilty by reason of insanity. Schuler, 33, is charged with 16 felony counts of sexual battery and three misdemeanor counts of offenses involving underage persons.

The young man, who just turned 19 two days ago, is a pre-med student at the Ohio State University. He told Judge Robert Peeler that Schuler made vodka smoothies for him and his friend, they smoked some marijuana and had sex.

He said Schuler gave him a massage and then made an overture he took as an invitation to have sex.

Schuler is accused of having sex with five Mason students, most of whom were football players, and buying or providing alcohol for them.

"She looked at me and said anything you want to do, whatever. I just kind of looked at her like what?" he said.

He said each boy allegedly took turns having sex with their teacher. At some point the three of them went outside to have a cigarette. Assistant Prosecutor Teresa Hiatt asked, "All three of you were naked?" He said yes.

The judge called a lunch break as the young man started to tell about the second time he and his friend went to Schuler's house, Aug. 27, 1010, when he and Schuler allegedly had sex on a kitchen counter.

Schuler's attorneys, Charlie H. Rittgers and his son Charlie M. Rittgers, say the boys took advantage of their client. The senior Rittgers in his opening statement told Peeler his client was on Zoloft at the time of the alleged incidents and her drinking further marred her abilities.

"The state wants to look at Stacy Schuler as a sex maniac with an insatiable appetite for sex, drugs and alcohol, who was willing to be passed around by these young men," he said. "The problem is that Stacy's ability to make sound and knowing decisions during those times was impaired by medical and psychological issues."

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5. Former Sheffield teacher Amanda Watkins on trial for rape, sodomy against student — (WHNT News 19)

Claire Aiello & Beth Jett

8:51 a.m. CDT, November 2, 2011

TUSCUMBIA, AL-

In Colbert County, testimony continues in the trial of a former Sheffield teacher who is charged with rape and sodomy against a student. The defense called a psychologist to testify about Amanda Watkins' mental state. The prosecution also called the teenage boy who was involved.

Normally, the prosecution presents its case first, but because of the psychologist's schedule, the defense started off the day by calling the psychologist. Frankie Preston, of Huntsville, testified that he saw Watkins for an evaluation on January 25, 2010. She was arrested the previous month, on December 19.

Preston testified Watkins took a test in his office, and the answers were put in a computer. A computer program generated results saying Watkins suffered from major depression, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, bipolar disorder, dissociative identity disorder, mixed personality disorder, borderline schizophrenia, chronic anxiety, fibromyalgia, hypertension and substance abuse.

Preston said Watkins suffered from these disorders at the time of her arrest.

Colbert County District Attorney Bryce Graham challenged the test results, saying they lacked precision because they were generated by a computer.

The defense emphasized Watkins' mental disorders are a result of her being raped when she was 16 years old. **They say she went to a hospital after it happened, and doctors prescribed her medication. They say her bouts with depression began at that time.**

The prosecution pointed out that Watkins' family has paid Preston \$6,000 to \$7,000 for treatment since she was arrested.

The prosecution also emphasized that even though Watkins suffered from these ailments, she taught children for six years.

"People can be mentally ill and still function at certain jobs," the psychologist replied.

Later in the day, the victim in the case took the stand for the prosecution. The 17-year-old was 15 when a police officer says he caught him and Watkins, then 38, in the back of a car having inappropriate relations.

In testimony, Watkins' former student said she refused his first request for sex that day, but then complied when he persisted.

The teen said he asked Watkins for sex, and at first, she declined, saying "we would get into a lot of trouble." However, when the teen said he wouldn't tell anyone, he said Watkins complied.

Defense attorneys suggested the boy took advantage of Watkins, since she was mentally ill with eight different disorders.

Watkins' father has been in court with her, holding a Bible as his daughter wiped away tears during the teen's testimony.

"I'm not defending her, what was done is wrong, it's wrong. But there are reasons also," said Delmer Duboise.

Duboise says Watkins' problems started at age 16 when she was raped, and didn't report it.

"She is sick... I haven't missed a week carrying her to the doctors," said Duboise. "I should have before this happened, but we didn't realize it until this happened how sick she was."

After the incident with the student in December 2009, Watkins went to a local hospital and had a rape kit administered to her. Prosecutors say when Watkins was with a nurse at that time, she said "I did something I shouldn't have done." District Attorney Graham said that statement shows Watkins knew right from wrong.

Testimony will continue on Wednesday.

6. Teacher Stephanie Ragusa Sentenced to 10 Years for Sex With Students — (ABC News)

<http://abcnews.go.com/US/teacher-stephanie-ragusa-sentenced-10-years-sex-students/story?id=11036498>

ABC News

By RAY SANCHEZ

June 28, 2010

A Florida teacher convicted of having sex with two of her students, was called a sexual predator today by a judge who sentenced her to 10 years in prison.

Stephanie Ragusa, wearing an orange jumpsuit, cried at one point during her sentencing hearing, but nodded her head in approval as Circuit Judge Chet Tharpe also imposed five years of sexual offender probation on the 31-year-old defendant.

"You were a teacher," Tharpe said. "And as parents, we place our trust in teachers to provide a safe environment in which our children can learn. You violated that trust in the worst imaginable way. You preyed on these young boys..."

The judge described Ragusa's demeanor during her court appearances as arrogant. "You had a very lackadaisical attitude on your face, smiling, jovial," Tharpe said. "If I had to sum up your attitude in one word, it would be arrogance. I don't know as we stand here today that you truly

appreciate the harm that you caused. I honestly believe, Ms. Ragusa, that you are a sexual predator. And I honestly believe that you are a danger to children in our community."

Ragusa, a former math teacher at Davidsen Middle School in Tampa, Fla., pleaded guilty in April to three counts of lewd and lascivious battery involving a 14-year-old boy, and two counts of having unlawful sex with a minor involving a 16-year-old student. The assaults occurred in 2008.

The prosecution described Ragusa as a master manipulator who sexually preyed on the most vulnerable teenage boys. Both boys she abused came from broken homes. The defense, however, said Ragusa was remorseful, a mentally disturbed woman with no prior criminal history, and a victim of traumatic experiences in her life. They asked for probation and house arrest.

Tharpe sentenced her to the maximum according to a plea deal, 10 years in prison followed by five years of sex offender probation.

The sentence was imposed after the mother of one of the victims, a 14-year-old boy, told the court that she believes the former Davidsen Middle School teacher "maliciously" preyed on her son's emotional disabilities.

Teacher Stephanie Ragusa Seduced Boy Assigned to Help Her

"She had access to their charts as far as their emotional behaviors," the mother said. "That takes time for you to know and to actually plan it out. I feel that she was very conniving in picking these boys out and preying on them. She used that to manipulate them and seduce them."

Ragusa, whose hair was done in cornrows, was expressionless as the mother described how deeply the case affected her son.

"He has dealt with a lot of guilt," she said. "He feels that it was his fault that all of this is happening. He blames himself. He does not think it's funny. He's not bragging or boasting. He actually gets very offended at any type of taunting. ... He suffers from depression, from being shy. He even got to the point where he became aggressive with everything, just wanting this all to go away."

The 14-year-old had been assigned to push Ragusa's wheelchair around school after she broke her foot. She told him he seemed shy and that she could help him overcome that, authorities said. The two had sex that afternoon in her apartment, the first of three sexual encounters authorities said spanned the school year that ended in May 2007.

The other victim, who is 16, had sex with Ragusa about 20 times, authorities said. The encounters continued even after she had been arrested and told to stay away from him. Assistant state attorney Rita Peters said Ragusa bought the boy clothing, named him executor of her will and professed her love in a letter that the state obtained.

A psychiatrist who evaluated Ragusa testified that she has bipolar and borderline personality disorders and is on antipsychotic medication. Ragusa told the court she is on five different medications. Borderline personality disorder manifests itself in delusions of grandeur and impulsive, risky behavior.

In April, she pleaded guilty to three counts of lewd and lascivious battery.

Before sentencing, Ragusa wept as she told the court that she took "full responsibility" for her actions.

Teacher Apologizes for Seducing Teenage Male Students

"I'm sincerely sorry for the pain and aggravation I have caused to the victims and their families," she said.

Ragusa has spent two years in jail. She would have faced 22 to 45 years in prison had a jury found her guilty of all the charges.

7. Spring teacher takes stand in sex trial — (ABC 13 Eyewitness News)

Friday, February 06, 2009 | 6:34 PM

SPRING, TX (KTRK) -- A former Spring school teacher accused of having sex with a student in class took the witness stand Friday.

Shannon Kay Hrozek faces a charge of sexual abuse of a child. This afternoon, she delivered graphic testimony about a sexually explicit essay she received from the student with whom she's accused of having sex.

Hrozek also testified about feeling pressure to raise bad test scores, and she took anti-depressants and anxiety medication because of the stress in class. (Copyright ©2009 KTRK-TV/DT. All Rights Reserved.)

Another Spring ISD teacher accused of having sex with student — (KHOU News)

Jeff McShan reports on the arrest of the English teacher from Spring Westfield High School.

A Spring Westfield High School teacher is accused of having sex with a student. Investigators said the woman was caught inside a classroom performing oral sex on a teenager.

The teacher is 42-year-old Shannon Kay Hrozek. She is a 10th grade English teacher at Westfield.

According to court documents, she was caught by the school's assistant principal performing oral sex on a 16-year-old male student inside Classroom 143 at the high school.

A school principal used a master key to get into the classroom after a janitor had informed him that the teacher and a student were in the room alone with the lights off.

The Harris County District Attorney's Office accepted sexual assault of a child charges Monday morning. Hrozek was being held in the Harris County Jail, but posted a \$50,000 bond Monday night.

She is the third Spring ISD teacher in the last four months that has been charged with having sex with a student.

Last month Carlos Valencia, another Westfield teacher, was charged with having sex with a FFA student.

In October, teacher Alison Moesbeck from Duett Middle School was charged with sexual assault of a child.

8. Ex-teacher's aide convicted in student sex case — (The Salt Lake Tribune)

<http://archive.sltrib.com/story.php?ref=/sltrib/home/50666991-76/billingsley-testified-jordan-sex.html.csp>

By Melinda rogers

Published Nov 13, 2010 10:38AM

West Jordan • A jury has found a former aide at West Jordan Middle School guilty of sexually abusing two students, following the conclusion of a four-day trial where defense attorneys for the woman accused her alleged victims of concocting the story as a mode of revenge.

After about two hours of deliberation, the 3rd District Court jury late Friday convicted Andrea Billingsley, 31, of three counts of first-degree felony sodomy, three counts of first-degree felony forcible sexual abuse and one count of rape. She faces up to life in prison when she is sentenced Dec. 17 before Judge Robert Adkins.

The verdict came after jurors heard tearful testimony from Billingsley, who took the stand in her own defense to say her alleged victims had waged a campaign of lies against her as a result of her reporting bad behavior to a school principal.

One of the boys had allegedly made comments about Billingsley's breasts in Spanish during a lunch detention in May 2009, she said. Feeling harassed, she reported the incident to a school principal. That boy, in turn, received detention and was angry with Billingsley, she testified.

She said she later met with school authorities when she heard rumors circulating that she had had sexual contact with the boy who had made the comment about her breasts. Billingsley approached her supervisor to say she was concerned about the rumor, and she met with a school principal and a student she believed had started the rumor to discuss the matter, she said.

Billingsley testified she thought the issue was resolved at that meeting in May 2009, and the whole situation had been written off as a vicious rumor. Then police showed up on her doorstep one day, she said.

She described being taken to jail, where other inmates told her to plead guilty to a lower count — advice she took, she said. Prosecutors presented evidence from a conversation where Billingsley

admitted being guilty. She testified she only did so because she wanted to get home to her husband and two children and thought saying she was guilty would allow her to go home.

She said she wasn't making comments with a clear head while in jail because she did not have access to medication she needs regularly to control depression, anxiety and attention deficit disorder.

"I've never been torn away from [my kids] like that before. I could only think about getting back home to my kids," Billingsley said, crying. She testified she had been married for 15 years and has 14-year-old and 11-year-old sons.

She acknowledged that she had picked up the victims in July 2009 and took them to West Jordan Park. But that was only after they had called asking for a ride and one of the boys had requested she purchase a coupon book as a fundraiser for the West Jordan High School football team.

She agreed, but when one of the boys started asking inappropriate questions about her husband and then touched and tried to lean over in an apparent attempt to kiss her in the SUV, she told them to get out of the vehicle and left the scene, she said.

On the way out of the car, one of the boys said "What are you going to do, tell the principal?" she testified.

She told her husband about the situation and he was upset, calling her "naïve" and scolding her for putting herself in a bad spot, she said.

In closing arguments, Salt Lake County Deputy District Attorney Peter Leavitt asked jurors to consider the case against Billingsley, including DNA evidence determined to be seminal fluid from one of the boys. The defense team said the semen traced back to the boy as a result of "biological overlay," where some of his DNA from simply riding in the car had mixed with semen from Billingsley's husband, which was in the vehicle because the couple had sex in it when camping.

Leavitt also pointed to telephone calls between Billingsley and one of the victims, where she told the boy "I'm glad you denied it, thank you dear," in a discussion the two had where the boy told her he had initially lied to police about their affair.

Leavitt said Billingsley preyed on the teens, who she knew would make easy sexual partners.

"Everybody knows 15-year-old boys are raging piles of hormones. You know who else knew that? She did," Leavitt said, pointing to Billingsley in the courtroom.

He categorized the paramount issue in the case as consent. He said the boys didn't protest against Billingsley's sexual advances, but in Utah law, it doesn't matter if the boys did or did not fight off the woman.

"The law says no for them," Leavitt said. "Kids can't be expected to make appropriate decisions."

But defense attorney Rhome Dean Zabriskie said Billingsley's case is one of a 15-year-old boy's fantasy turned rumor gone wild. He said the boy bragged to his football teammates about getting oral sex from Billingsley in a classroom to get attention, but didn't want to seem like a liar once the story morphed into a police investigation.

Zabriskie reiterated to the jury several times that the allegations never happened.

He said the victim's choice was to be "a liar or a lover," and the boy chose to continue on with his made up story to impress his football teammates, who the boy referred to as a "brotherhood" during trial. He accused the football players of covering up the truth about the boy's fabrication.

"The 'brotherhood' is expected to keep quiet," Zabriskie said, later adding "We cannot enable people to lie."

He told the jury it's preposterous that Billingsley would engage in sex acts in a classroom in the middle of the day, when people were walking in and out of an unlocked door and a gym class was in full swing next door. He said it's unlikely that Billingsley would have had sex with the boys in West Jordan Park in the summer, on a Sunday afternoon when dozens of families were out and about - and in a park just steps away from a police station.

He said his client's life will never be the same, and she and her family have suffered public scorn and embarrassment over publicity of the case.

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9. Former charter school teacher sent to prison for raping student — (The Buffalo News)

Updated: 04/23/09 07:51 AM

By Gene Warner and Matt Gryta, NEWS STAFF REPORTERS

"She was preying on me to manipulate my mind, to then have sex with me." - Statement from Cara L. Dickey's victim

Sentenced to 4 years for statutory rape

Cara L. Dickey's teenage rape victim didn't appear in court Wednesday, but his pain and anger filled the courtroom as his two-page statement was read to the judge.

On a day when tears were shed on both sides of the courtroom and in the spectator section, State Supreme Court Justice John L. Michalski sentenced Dickey to four years in prison on her guilty plea to two statutory rape charges.

Before the sentencing, prosecutor Kristin A. St. Mary read the letter from the boy, now 15, whom Dickey has admitted raping twice.

“This lady is sick and selfish. She really had me not even caring about anyone but her,” the boy wrote, admitting that he was obsessed with her. “She was preying on me to manipulate my mind, to then have sex with me.”

The boy stated that he has been scarred for life.

“I can see and feel what was taken [from me] and what I will never get back,” he added.

Authorities have said that Dickey, the boy’s former eighth-grade teacher at South Buffalo Charter School, picked him up June 16 in South Buffalo, imprisoned him for about 21 hours and attempted to carry out a suicide pact with him by supplying him with alcohol and over-the-counter drugs.

Then last summer, after being ordered by a judge not to contact the boy, Dickey met with him numerous times, leading to the two second-degree rape charges to which she pleaded guilty in March.

“Referring to the day she and I attempted to take our lives, I’m still in shock and awe,” the boy stated in the letter. “Life has too much to offer, and young people have too much to offer the world today to just take our own lives. Or, in my case, being persuaded that taking my life would be the right thing to do.

“She made me believe that I would be nothing without her, and she was going to kill herself no matter what, because she knew she was going to jail. This is how badly she manipulated my mind.”

The boy, through St. Mary, then asked Michalski to sentence his former teacher to eight to 10 years in prison.

After the letter was read, the boy’s father broke down several times in addressing the court and Dickey.

“Cara, you’re a very selfish person for what you did to my child,” the father said, in barely audible terms.

The father then pleaded with the judge to give Dickey more than the two to five years that she faced under state sentencing guidelines, calling that type of sentence a “slap on the hand.”

“I’d like to see her go to jail for a very long time,” the father said, regaining his composure. “Our son is sentenced for the rest of his life.”

“Your honor, with all due respect, anything less than the maximum, . . . she really deserves the maximum,” the father added.

In making the defense case, Daniel J. Chiacchia, Dickey’s attorney, insisted that anti-depression medication prescribed by mental-health professionals two years ago likely played a role in his client’s fall from grace.

Chiacchia painted a portrait of a young woman, with a horrible childhood, living the American dream by becoming a teacher, heading the social studies department as well as serving as the eighth-grade adviser at South Buffalo Charter School.

But, according to Chiacchia, Dickey, the married mother of three young children, began struggling with depression in 2007 and started feeling hopeless.

Chiacchia said that the Cara Dickey who was on the drug Celexa was not the Cara Dickey who had carved out a successful life and career in the first 29 years of her life.

Reading from several letters on her behalf, from a relative and a pastor, Chiacchia said her depression and her medication outweighed her ability to understand the consequences of her actions.

“She just couldn’t see right from wrong,” Chiacchia said.

Dickey, who seemed to be crying throughout most of the 29-minute court session, then addressed the court. She could find no other words than to say, “I’m sorry, deeply sorry,” asking for forgiveness for what she called her betrayal.

“Your honor, I take full responsibility for my actions. They were my own,” she told Michalski. “But my actions throughout that time do not define my character. I am a good person who made a bad mistake, and I’m a good mother, a great mother.”

Michalski told Dickey that she let down her family, the victim’s family and the entire community through her actions while in a position of trust.

“Your despicable actions must be punished appropriately,” the judge said, before sentencing her to the two concurrent four-year sentences.

Under the plea deal Chiacchia worked out with the office of Erie County District Attorney Frank A. Sedita III, Michalski issued an order of protection barring Dickey from contacting the boy or his family until October 2020.

Dickey also had to surrender her New York State teaching certificate and will become a state sex offender required to register with authorities wherever she moves.

Following the sentencing, attorney Robert D. Steinhaus, representing the victim’s family, confirmed that he has filed a State Supreme Court lawsuit against Dickey and the South Buffalo Charter School, claiming that their malfeasance and negligence inflicted damage on the boy.

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10. Teacher tells court she sent inappropriate e-mails — (Canada.com)

Andrew Seymour, The Ottawa Citizen

Published: Monday, December 10, 2007

A junior high teacher from the Cornwall area on trial for sexual assault told court she sent inappropriate e-mails to a 13-year-old former student, but denied she had ever engaged in a sexual relationship with the young male.

Taking the witness stand in her own defence, Jennifer Dorland told court she never kissed or fondled the student nor allowed him to touch her breasts and genitals.

However, Mrs. Dorland, 42, admitted her decision to engage in suggestive and sexual e-mail discussions with the former student, whose name is protected by a publication ban, has left her "embarrassed and ashamed."

It was absolutely a terrible, horrible idea. I have been paying for that e-mail and conversation for two years," testified Mrs. Dorland, who in one of the e-mails told the student she loved groans and hands on her stomach.

In the other e-mail, Mrs. Dorland - who is charged with sexual assault, sexual interference and invitation to sexual touching - asked the student if he has any regrets.

That e-mail was sent hours after the former student testified he and the teacher kissed and fondled each other on a couch in the basement of Mrs. Dorland's home in September 2004. The two e-mails, which were entered into evidence last week, were sent on Sept. 11 and 22, 2004.

Mrs. Dorland testified the first e-mail was in response to questions about how to treat and touch a woman, while the second had to do with the student's interest in an older girl. But on cross-examination, Crown prosecutor Jennifer Burke attacked Mrs. Dorland's explanation, questioning why a dedicated teacher would risk her job, marriage, two children and social life when she knew the e-mail conversations were inappropriate.

"You gambled with it all because your relationship with (the 13-year-old) was stronger than you," said Ms. Burke.

Dissecting the first e-mail line by line, Ms. Burke said the message makes "no sense" if Mrs. Dorland was merely trying to help the teen.

Despite feeling uncomfortable with the e-mail exchange at the time, Mrs. Dorland said she answered the questions because she didn't want the student, whom she viewed like a "nephew", to feel "abandoned" by her.

"My intention was to be there and answer questions for him," testified Mrs. Dorland, who remained composed throughout nearly four hours of testimony.

Under questioning by her lawyer, Frank Addario, Mrs. Dorland testified earlier in the day that she had grown close to the boy after getting to know his mother during the summer.

However, she never viewed him as a peer, she testified. But Ms. Burke questioned why Mrs. Dorland told a Children's Aid Society worker she viewed the student as a "real friend" and not a "kid friend" during an interview the day after her arrest on Jan. 26, 2006.

Last week, court heard Mrs. Dorland took a cocktail of anti-depressants, Tylenols and alcohol the day after learning about the allegations against her. Yesterday, Ms. Burke suggested Mrs. Dorland attempted suicide because the allegations were true.

But Mrs. Dorland said the suicide attempt was as the result of a combination of factors, including her father's illness, broken marriage and work stress, not because there were any truth to the allegations.

At the time police launched the investigation in January 2006, Mrs. Dorland testified she was "relieved" because she believed the "lies" about her would be exposed. Mrs. Dorland also testified she never told her former lover and current husband, Bill MacDonald, about the allegations against her. Mr. MacDonald testified last week that he was with Mrs. Dorland the morning of the alleged sexual assault. However, he didn't come forward with an alibi for Mrs. Dorland until March 2007.

11. A TALE OF 2 MOLESTER-TEACHERS — (World Net Daily)

<http://www.wnd.com/2006/03/35401/>

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KEVIN MCCULLOUGH

A teacher who already had been found guilty of having sex with a boy who was under the age of 15 said at her sentencing phase of her trial this week, "I was the monster these families think I am." An honest admission from a teacher who had betrayed massive trust of students, parents, family and friends.

That teacher was not Debra LaFave. This teacher's name was Toni Woods, and late yesterday she was sentenced to four to 20 years in prison for having sex with multiple boys under the age of 15. Woods did try LaFave's trick, though. Her attorneys tried to get the court to believe that her actions were caused by her mental illness and Prozac. The court didn't buy it and gave her the penalty – which on the low end still seems rather light to me. Sex with four children only gets you four years?

Would that the judge and the prosecutors in the LaFave trial could have gotten four years for the monster in that case.

LaFave's story is all the more damning because she makes no admission. Listen to what the "American Woman" says: "No one reported on my bi-polar. The media were so mean." Yeah, babe, cry us a river.

LaFave's joke of a press conference reminded me of a snotty brat that always gets her way. And the problem now is that her press conference was in essence the final say on the matter.

Now, mental health professionals will have to yield to LaFave's version of events, because those who diagnosed her were never questioned as to the accuracy of their diagnosis. No true cross examination took place forcing the facts on LaFave's true mental state. Fortunately, my listeners are much more savvy. And while the rest of the world is willing to let LaFave skate, we are not. These were just some of the observations listeners to my show, "The MuscleHead Revolution," made in discussing the matter yesterday.

How is it that her bi-polar symptoms only mysteriously appeared once she had been charged with the crime?

How is it that her former husband has no recollection of bi-polar symptoms prior to the discovery of her sins?

How is it that her school administrators, doctors and even parents were unable to discover her bi-polar nature throughout the entirety of her life?

How is it that if her first incidence of sex with the minor was based on her bi-polar problem, did it only resurface and reoccur when she was sexually aroused to be with the same student again?

There were a lot of other things LaFave said in her press conference. Listen to the arrogance for yourself – a la Mrs. Robinson. Since much of my audience are Christians, from New York City to Humble, Texas, they openly doubted the veracity of LaFave's claim that she is a "strong Christian woman." I also drew personal amusement from the fact that while she also slammed the media coverage of her trial in every other breath, she then stated that she had decided that journalism was the pursuit she should follow since she could no longer teach.

If you can't get them to like you, become one of them, huh?

But by far the most insulting statement LaFave made was the fact that this entire, sad, evil charade that had played over the last 18 months amounted to nothing more than "a bump in the road." (Listen for yourself.)

In other words – and this is really key – she doesn't see herself as "the monster that family thinks she is."

Before she embarrassed true, believing Christians all over the world, she should have taken the moment to consider the arrogance with which she still defiantly expresses her position in the matter.

And here is where the irony sits: had she admitted that she was a monster, she would have earned greater respect and support from Christians in their response to her from God-given compassion. Instead, her cold, steel-like arrogance further isolates her from those who can easily spot the truth from the phony.

So Woods will do time, admitting she was a monster in her behavior. LaFave skates but gets a new piece of tracking jewelry on her arm and has to vow "not to get caught" for the next seven years.

One monster might find redemption; the other one thinks she's fooled them all.

Not bad ... for nothing more than a "bump in the road."

Note: The Ocala Star-Banner reported that Lefave was on Paxil and Wellbutrin, not Prozac.