



## Former officer pleads guilty

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Former Farmington police officer Jerney Buss has pleaded guilty to third-degree criminal sexual conduct, a felony, in connection with the sexual relationship he had with a 16-year-old Farmington girl last fall.

On Nov. 28, 2004 an adult female contacted the Farmington Police Department claiming an older, married man was having contact with her daughter. After an e-mail address and cellular telephone number matched those belonging to Buss the case was turned over to the Dakota County Sheriff's Department.

The 16-year-old reported that Buss was on duty when he pulled over her and a friend during Farmington High School's Homecoming Week. The girl also stated that Buss gave her his business card and told her to contact him if she heard about any underage parties.

The two began talking on the telephone and exchanging text messages. The relationship eventually became physical and the girl said they had met about six or seven times and had intercourse twice, while Buss was off duty.

When sheriff's investigators confronted Buss he confirmed the information. Buss admitted that he knew what he did was wrong and he had told the girl that it was illegal.

"I'm just glad this whole thing is over," said Farmington Police Chief Dan Siebenaler. "But I'm also glad that Jerney took responsibility for what he did."

Dakota County Attorney James Backstrom called the case "sad and troubling," but added that he too was pleased that Buss stood up and accepted responsibility for his actions.

Buss will be back in court on April 5 for sentencing. Backstrom said the county will be seeking a penalty of six months in county jail, 15 years probation and possible fines and restitution to the victim. Buss will also have to register as a sex offender for 10 years, has lost his law enforcement license and will meet with a psychologist who will provide counseling recommendations based on a psychological and sexual evaluation.

"We feel the possible penalty fits the significant misconduct Mr. Buss displayed," said Backstrom. "It is wrong for any person in a position of authority to influence and pressure, even subtly, a minor for sexual contact."

The legal age of consent in Minnesota is 16 unless the older party is an authority figure, in which case it is 18. Backstrom said the list of authority figures includes teachers, psychologists and police officers.

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