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Officer Dennis Paul Decker

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Results 1 to 4 of 4

Thread: [Officer Dennis Paul Decker](#)

		Thread Tools	Display
03-10-2008 09:06 AM			#1
Administrator Administrator		Join Date: Mar 2008 Location: Riverside, CA Posts: 2,038	



Officer Dennis Paul Decker

Testimony expected in trial of former Desert Hot Springs officer

January 30th 2008

A girl who says she was molested by a now-former Desert Hot Springs police officer while she was a member of the police Explorer program is expected to take the stand today in the man's trial, as is her mother.

Dennis Paul Decker, 37, is facing 20 criminal counts, including aggravated sexual assault on a child, rape and lewd acts with a child. Prosecutors claim Decker molested a young female relative over a 10-year period beginning when she was 7 years old and a friend of hers during a one- year period in 2006 when she was a member of the police Explorer program.

During opening statements yesterday, Decker's attorney, John Patrick Dolan, said the young relative made up the molestation allegation so she could be "emancipated" from the family. But Deputy District Attorney Victoria Cameron said Decker began making sexual advances toward the girl in 1996 and she "became his sex toy" for a decade.

Decker was originally charged with 37 counts, but some were dropped. He is being tried on 20 counts, including aggravated sexual assault on a child, rape and lewd acts with a child. Decker founded and supervised the Explorers in Desert Hot Springs and also worked as a resource officer at Desert Hot Springs High School and Desert Springs Middle School. He is being held at the Indio Jail in lieu of \$2 million bail.

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03-10-2008 03:16 PM

#2

Administrator 
Administrator

Join Date: Mar 2008
Location: Riverside, CA
Posts: 2,038



Relative will testify

March 8th 2008

The former officer, 37, is being tried on 20 criminal counts, including aggravated sexual assault on a child, rape and lewd acts with a child involving two alleged victims.

Prosecutors claim the man, who is no longer on the Desert Hot Springs police force, molested a young female relative over a 10-year period, beginning when she was 7 years old, and a teenager over several months in 2006 while she was a member of the Desert Hot Springs police Explorers ride-along program, which the man ran and supervised.

If convicted of all the charges, the former officer could face life in prison, according to prosecutors. The man's defense attorney, John Patrick Dolan, said he plans to play for the jury and the witness a tape in which the girl who took part in the Explorers program denies to a district attorney investigator that the former officer ever molested her.

After the two-hour interview, she told the investigator the molestations did indeed occur, but recanted later that day after speaking with her mother, Dolan said.

In court yesterday, Dolan showed the jury raw video footage of a KESQ-TV news piece in which reporter Nathan Baca asks the now 15-year-old girl if she was surprised by the former officer's arrest.

"Yeah, it was kind of a shock, kind of a surprise to all of us, especially to the department and to the Explorers. What happens, happens. Nothing you can do," the girl said on camera.

Baca interviewed the girl in March 2007 while shooting a news story on the Cathedral City Police Department's Explorer program, which the girl joined when the Desert Hot Springs program shut down.

On the stand, the girl has insisted that when she told Baca she was

"shocked and surprised," she was not talking about Decker's arrest. "I was shocked and surprised that the DHS Explorer program was canceled," she said.

Outside court, Dolan said the video brought into question the girl's credibility.

Deputy District Attorney Victoria Cameron insisted the girl is a credible witness.

Last month, the girl testified that she was not surprised when the man was arrested because he acted with sexual intent several times while she was a member of the Explorers program — poking her in the breast, putting his hand on her knee, and picking her up and hugging her.

Under cross-examination, however, she testified that she never told him to stop.

In his opening statement, Dolan told the jury that the young relative the man is accused of molesting made up the allegations so that she could be emancipated from the family and live her life as a lesbian.

But Cameron said the former officer began making sexual advances toward the girl in 1996, and that she became his "sex toy" for a decade.

She is now 18.

The former officer, who was arrested in Marina del Rey on Sept. 26, 2006, founded and supervised the Explorers program in Desert Hot Springs and also worked as a resource officer at Desert Hot Springs High School and Desert Springs Middle School.

He is being held at the Indio Jail in lieu of \$2 million bail.

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04-23-2008 01:10 PM

#3

Administrator 
Administrator

Join Date: Mar 2008
Location: Riverside, CA
Posts: 2,038

Suicide watch

UPDATE: Former Desert Hot Springs officer on suicide watch following conviction

Wed, Apr 23, 2008

Posted by: PE News

A former Desert Hot Springs police officer facing a possible life sentence for repeatedly molesting an underage female relative was on suicide watch today at the Indio Jail, his attorney said. Dennis Paul Decker, 37, was convicted Tuesday of 14 counts of aggravated sexual assault and lewd acts on a child under 14. He was acquitted on two other counts.

Jurors also acquitted Decker on one charge and failed to reach verdicts on three others stemming from the alleged molestation in 2005-06 of a second teen, who was taking part in the Police Department's Explorer program that Decker founded and operated.

Riverside County Superior Court Judge Harold W. Hopp scheduled sentencing for June 27.

Decker is facing 90 years to life in prison, according to Deputy District Attorney Victoria Cameron. Decker's attorney John Patrick Dolan said the former officer was placed on suicide watch and given his own cell at the Indio Jail for his protection due to the "nature of the crime."

Dolan said Decker would likely be moved to the Banning Jail, where he had been held prior to the trial, until his sentencing at the Larson Justice Center.

—From news services

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06-30-2008 08:06 AM

#4


Administrator 
Administrator

Join Date: Mar 2008
Location: Riverside, CA
Posts: 2,038

Sentenced to 134 years to life

Former Desert Hot Springs police officer Dennis Paul Decker sentenced to 134 Years To Life

June 28th, 2008

 **DESERT HOT SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA** - A former Desert Hot Springs police officer convicted of molesting an underage female relative over a 10-year period was sentenced to 134 years to life in prison today, but he continued to adamantly deny his guilt.

"I feel I have been convicted of a crime on lies and fabrication," the 37-year-old former officer said during his sentencing hearing, which was held in an Indio courtroom packed with law enforcement and friends and relatives of the victim.

The former officer was convicted April 22 on 14 of 16 counts, including aggravated sexual assault and rape, stemming from the molestation, which began when the victim was 7 years old.

Jurors acquitted him on one charge and failed to reach a verdict on five others stemming from allegations that he inappropriately touched another girl — now 15 years old — who was a member of the police Explorers Program that he ran.

Riverside County Superior Court Judge Harold W. Hopp rejected a prosecution request that the former officer be chemically castrated as part of his sentence.

Prior to the sentencing, Deputy District Attorney Victoria Cameron read a statement from the man's now-18-year-old relative, who was too emotional to read it herself.

In the statement, she told the former officer, "You disgust me" and "It's not my fault you're a pervert."

"You were supposed to protect me from harm ... not cause me harm," the victim's statement said. She also chastised his treatment of her brother, who was devastated by the guilty verdict. But she also told the former officer, Decker that she still loved him and said, "I wish you the best of luck in prison because you will need it."

The former officer, wearing orange jail clothing and appearing disheveled, insisted that the jury was given only "bits and pieces" of the truth. He denied ever using the girl as a "sex toy" — as Cameron said during the trial — and would only concede that he had confided in the victim too much about his marital problems.

"I don't believe they (the girl and her mother) ever expected this to escalate as far as it has," he said. "It was a him or us situation." He also slammed the District Attorney's Office for "unfairly" investigating his case and for treating him differently because he was a police officer.

Following the sentencing, Cameron called his statement "garbage" and said the former police officer would die in prison.

"He's a disgrace to law enforcement and a disgrace to fatherhood," she said. The minimum sentence he could have received was 90 years to life, but he could have been given as much as 138 years to life, his attorney John Patrick Dolan said, adding that his client's appeal was filed within five minutes of his sentencing.

Dolan said his client was holding up well, "but he feels he was wrongly convicted and it was hard for him to sit there and listen to the district attorney's disparaging words about him. ... He's hopeful about the appeal and I've heard he wants to get married."

Dolan said he expected his client to be placed in "protective custody" because he is a former police officer and now a convicted child molester.

"He doesn't seem suicidal, just disappointed," Dolan said.

During the 2 1/2-month trial, Cameron told jurors that the former officer used the young relative as a "sex toy" over a decade, and that she suffered psychological consequences for enduring "unspeakable things."

The prosecutor played a taped phone conversation between the girl and the former officer, set up by the District Attorney's Office prior to the officer's September 2006 arrest, in which the girl told him she might be pregnant.

He responded that there were "two things in play here. You were on your period... and I used a thing," which the prosecution contended was code for condom. He went on to say, "Will you let me know what happens and I will take care of it. I promise."

Dolan argued that "the thing" was a credit card the former officer used to purchase birth control for the girl, who he knew was sexually active. Dolan contended the former officer was speaking in code because he took the call

while at a police training conference, when he was surrounded by other officers.

He also argued that the girl was out for revenge against the former officer because he forbade her from leading a lesbian lifestyle, and claimed that she was looking to be emancipated.

Cameron said the former officer's "own words on the stand and in the pretext phone call convicted him ... and everything that has resulted is the result of his own actions."

She said she was not surprised at him filing an appeal, because "he has nothing to lose and our taxpayers will have to pay for it." She also said she hoped the victim could now lead a normal life. "But you never really recover from something like this," she said.

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