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## No-contest plea for ex-police officer who had sex with boys

Worst case would bring more than 2 years in prison

HAYWARD, 2007 | By Henry K. Lee, Chronicle Staff Writer

A former Hayward police officer pleaded no contest Friday to two counts of oral copulation with a minor and could face a prison sentence of more than two years.

Jeff Cristofani, 41, of Tracy must register as a sex offender after admitting that he had engaged in oral sex with a boy in December 2001 and had oral sex with another boy in April 1997.

Cristofani, who resigned in April after an 18-year career, declined to comment after entering his pleas at the Hayward Hall of Justice. Judge Philip Sarkisian of Alameda County Superior Court ordered Cristofani to return to court Dec. 4, when he will undergo a 90-day evaluation at a state prison.

Another judge could sentence Cristofani to no more than two years and eight months in prison after taking into consideration the Department of Corrections' evaluation as well as a separate report from Alameda County probation officials.

The judge warned Cristofani that he could be sentenced to three years and eight months in prison if he ran afoul of the law again.

In exchange for Cristofani's plea, prosecutors dropped three other charges, including another oral-copulation count and two counts of intimidating or dissuading a witness.

Those allegations were lodged after police said he threatened to shoot a 17-year-old boy if he told anyone that they had engaged in sexual activity. Cristofani had also been accused of telling the boy to keep a second victim quiet.

Legally, pleading no contest - called nolo contendere - is the same as pleading guilty, but the conviction cannot be used against the defendant in a civil lawsuit.

Deputy District Attorney Susan Torrence said she is very happy with the plea deal.

"I'm glad that the victims did not have to go to court, although they were ready and willing to," Torrence said.

Cristofani's attorney, Terry Bowman, said, "It's a very regrettable situation. It was very important to Jeff to take responsibility. He's looking forward to moving on and taking his life in a more positive direction."

The allegations came to light earlier this year when one of the victims agreed to meet with Cristofani and carry a hidden tape recorder. The accuser confronted Cristofani and alluded to a threat the officer allegedly made to "shoot him if (the alleged victim) ever disclosed their sexual affair," Hayward police said in a statement that outlined grounds for the arrest.

The same alleged victim told police he believed the officer had sexually assaulted his friend and reported that Cristofani had told him during an Internet chat to keep his friend quiet, the statement said.

Police contacted that person, who said Cristofani had orally copulated him at the officer's Tracy home when he was 16 years old, police said.

A search of the officer's home after his arrest revealed images on his computer that "could be classified as child pornography" and photos depicting Cristofani "engaging in sexual relations with unknown young males," the statement said.

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