

## Former Salinas police officer gets 9 months in jail for molesting girl

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A judge sentenced a former Salinas police officer Friday to 270 days in jail for molesting a 12-year-old girl five years ago.

Judge Russell Scott gave Lance Mosher until Oct. 28 to surrender so he can apply to serve the jail time on home confinement.

According to testimony at his preliminary hearing, the girl told investigators that Mosher once touched her sexually over her clothing and made her touch him. A suicidal Mosher confessed to his brother in April 2010 that he had not resisted when the girl placed his hand between her legs.

The 45-year-old pleaded no contest to one felony county in July. He had faced a potential 12-year prison sentence as originally charged.

A six-year veteran of the Salinas Police Department, he was placed on administrative leave when he was arrested in September 2010. He can never serve as a peace officer again.

Scott said Mosher and the girl's mother had placed the victim in a "pressure cooker" after the abuse by forcing her to attend counseling sessions with Mosher.

Due to cultural norms regarding female submissiveness in her native Nepal, Scott said, the mother had withdrawn her cooperation with investigators and support from her daughter.

"What we have is a child in a pressure cooker from the time of the triggering event until today, really," he said. "It's a dynamic that helps explain ... why children who are molested end up with serious mental conditions, whether in their childhood or perhaps later on."

Prosecutor Cristina Johnson objected to defense attorney Juliet Peck's comments to the media regarding the girl's "mental illness."

Peck said the girl had been in therapy and been diagnosed as bipolar and having borderline personality disorder.

But those conditions would require significant medication to control, Johnson said, and the girl was unmedicated and had no problems either now or when she was interviewed by investigators.

She suggested the therapist violated her duty to notify authorities of the girl's claims of molestation. They were reported years later by Mosher's brother, who had been informed by the victim's mother.

Peck said the therapist was highly regarded and did not report because she did not believe the girl.

Scott noted that Mosher confessed to more than one person. Scott said he did not hesitate to follow through with the sentence because "it at least takes the lid off the pressure cooker."

The outcome stood in stark contrast to Thursday's sentencing of former Salinas high school teacher Manuel Rivera, who pleaded guilty to misdemeanor counts of molesting two students.

Rivera, 69, was sentenced to 360 days in jail and denied the opportunity to apply for home confinement.

Johnson noted that Rivera used his role as a teacher to assault multiple victims, while Mosher's job was not related to his crime.

Though Rivera was allowed to plead to misdemeanors to spare his victims from testimony at trial, his sexual conduct was also more aggravated than Mosher's.

And unlike Rivera — who enraged Judge Julie Culver by denying crimes to which he pleaded no contest — Mosher opted to make no statement when invited by Judge Scott.

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