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Former St. Tammany Parish Sheriff's Office deputy, Lacombe man each get prison in separate incest cases

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By **Ramon Antonio Vargas, The Times-Picayune**
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A **St. Tammany Parish** judge on Monday sentenced two men in separate incest cases to half the maximum prison time they faced.



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St. Tammany Parish Justice Center in Covington

In her Covington courtroom, state Judge Allison H. Penzato imposed a 10-year prison sentence on James R. Davis, 43, a former parish Sheriff's Office deputy **convicted late last year of committing incest** once in 2007 with a teenager. She gave five years to Albert J. Marrero Jr., 40, a Lacombe man convicted in March of attempted aggravated incest. They each must also register as sex offenders.

Deputies began investigating Davis, an 18-year veteran of the sheriff's criminal patrol division, after the young woman reported the incident to them on Oct. 16, 2007. The next morning,

Davis surrendered and confessed, authorities said. Sheriff Jack Strain fired him.

A grand jury eventually indicted him on one count of aggravated incest, which carries up to 20 years in prison upon conviction.

Assistant District Attorney Leigh Anne Wall presented the state's case against Davis during a two-

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day trial starting Dec. 9. The six-person jury deliberated for three-and-a-half hours before finding him guilty as charged, district attorney's office spokesman Rick Wood has said.

After routine sentencing delays, Penzato on Monday admonished Davis for using his status and "position of trust" as a law enforcement officer to take advantage of the victim.

"A lesser sentence would deprecate the seriousness of the offense," she said.

Strain and sheriff's office commanders observed the hearing from the courtroom gallery, across from about a dozen of Davis' supporters, including his mother, wife and children. A teary-eyed Davis, who wore shackles and an inmate's jumpsuit, shook hands with and embraced nearly all of them after Penzato adjourned the proceeding.

"Our hearts go out to the victim," Strain said after a brief exchange with his former deputy. "(Davis) is a good man, who apparently screwed up."

Afterward, Davis' lawyer, John Lindner, objected to Penzato's ruling.

"Ten years under the circumstances is excessive," said the defense attorney, who plans to request a sentence reduction. "He has never been in trouble before."

The victim did not attend the sentencing and opted against issuing a statement for the record.

In Marrero's case, he was arrested in January 2010 shortly after the victim told investigators he had abused her for five years starting in 2004.

Prosecutors Jack Hoffstadt and Scott Gardner tried Marrero for aggravated incest, and lawyer P. David Carollo defended him. Late the night of March 24, the jury found Marrero guilty of a reduced charge punishable by up to 10 years in prison.

Carollo maintained Monday that his client was innocent, but the victim addressed the court and portrayed herself as "a child being used as a woman, as a play toy."

She said, "I was broken, put down, and made to live a life no one should be made to live."

Ramon Antonio Vargas can be reached at rvargas@timespicayune.com or 985.898.4827.

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May 02, 2011 at 7:27PM

I do believe they should be making a issue with the deputy who didnt pay his taxes more than


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sending this predator to 10 years in the prison. All the while a trashball who did aggravated incest to a victim repeatedly got half the time? Oh my how horrible.

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specops103

May 02, 2011 at 8:00PM

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Dep. Chief Sharp and State Sen. Jack Donahue have raped the public's trust by cheating on their property taxes for years!

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josef98

May 02, 2011 at 9:13PM

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Sure would be nice if the top three St Tammany cops paid property taxes.

I know of a few NOPD top brass that should be paying fair St Tammany property taxes too.

Still waiting for that bomb to land. If I have to I may do it myself without media help.

How did top NOPD Brass live in St Tammany for 30 years and still get raises despite a moratorium on out of parish living?

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TanFan

May 03, 2011 at 4:39AM

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Ya know, I'm not at all certain that all these Top Brass NOPD and top three STP cops not paying property taxes doesn't seem to shout out some sort to "benefit" that may perhaps come with a political favor. When will the US Attorneys office start taking a look at all this???

Who can start a web page or Blog devoted to uncovering this stuff and a public demand for proper investigation thereof.

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Fight-IESI

May 03, 2011 at 10:17AM

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They need to investigate Core's office - I'm convinced all of these property tax dodgers knew exactly what they were doing as did Core. They all need to spend some time in the big house.

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TanFan

May 03, 2011 at 4:21AM

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No Mr. Strain, Davis is NOT a Good man who just screwed up. He is a monster. And the only reason he is behind bars is BECAUSE the victim was able to get away from the environment and his "grip" and stand tall, bring him to justice. Minor children of parental sexual abuse live in total hell. The abuse is never just sexual. In order for monsters like Davis to abuse, they FIRST establish that the "victim" is first a "problem" child/teen, they're also Liar's-not believable, and they're lives are one living hell. The victims are ALWAYS robbed of and chance that exposing someone live Davis will be met with being accused of making it all up---that they are a liar. No Jack Strain, this victim had the guts to stand tall. Davis is NOT a good man who screwed up, he is a monster. He would have and did do everything possible to dis credit the victim. A common pattern that every adult should be educated on. When a parent or step parent is determined to dis-credit the honesty of a child/teen, with it showing hostile attitude towards them, red flags should go up.

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TanFan

May 03, 2011 at 4:32AM

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It really bothers me that Sheriff Strain would actually console Davis. This monster will actually serve perhaps 3-4 yrs. The victim will continue being a victim all her life. She'll have difficulty with relationships, she'll never forget nor be able to remove the memories of being violated, added with what it took for her emotionally to bring him to justice. Yet, Davis can shed a few tears in court while being imbraced by his mother, wife, and other family members. Disgusting.

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May 03, 2011 at 10:47AM

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"Our hearts go out to the victim," Strain said after a brief exchange with his former deputy. "(Davis) is a good man, who apparently screwed up." This is a textbook definition of Contradiction of a statement. This is absolutely telling of how our Sheriff's department is being run. SEXUALLY ABUSING A YOUNG WOMAN DOES NOT CONSTITUTE SCREWING UP! I cannot believe he said that, screwing up is making a poor choice, sexual abusers don't make poor choices -- they're sick, psychotic loosers that need to be locked up!

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May 04, 2011 at 2:06PM

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Sheriff Strain, SEXUALLY ABUSING A YOUNG WOMAN DOES NOT CONSTITUTE SCREWING UP! It's a CRIME!
Wise up! Sad, sad, sad that you would be there to support him. Your job is to put criminals in jail.

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