

Clark pleads in charges stemming from cell phone photos from underage girl

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Aaron Clark, a former Rockaway Beach Police officer, pleaded guilty to Hindering Prosecution and Tampering with physical evidence in court March 26. Clark was sentenced to 36 months of probation for the charges.

Clark was originally charged with using a child in a display of sexually explicit conduct and encouraging child sex abuse, over allegations that while a varsity softball coach at Neah-Kah-Nie High School he encouraged a 14-year-old female player to send him sexually explicit photos of herself.

The plea agreement does not include any charges for the alleged solicitation of the photos, instead they relate to Clark's destruction of the evidence of the original crimes. Joshua Marquis, a special prosecutor brought in on the case from Clatsop County, said that the more severe charges might have been hard to prove, since the photos were destroyed.

"We have a lot of circumstantial evidence, but no photos," he said.

Marquis said that he is satisfied with the "public shaming" that the trial has been for Clark, and that Clark isn't a police officer anymore.

Marquis also said that he did not believe that Clark would have gone to prison if the case had gone to trial, and that he did not want to put the victim and the victim's family through the stress of a trial.

"I'm satisfied because I know that the victim is not going to go up on the stand and be torn to shreds by a defense attorney."

For the full story on Clark's plea and sentencing, read the March 28 edition of the Headlight Herald.

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