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# Teen testifies to sexual relationship with prison officer

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January 23, 2013 6:20 am • KRISTEN ZAMBO kristen.zambo@journaltimes.com

RACINE - An 18-year-old girl testified Tuesday that her family, and then police, learned of her sexual relationship more than three years ago with a prison corrections sergeant because she thought she was pregnant.

She said she was at a restaurant with her mother in October 2009 when she sent a text message to her mom: " 'What if I was pregnant?'

"And she started balling her eyes out," the girl testified Tuesday during the first day of a jury trial for Aaron L. Pope, 32, of Racine.

He's accused of molesting the girl when she was 14 years old at the Racine home he shared with his girlfriend and her children. She was a friend of the family and their alleged sexual activities were not related to his work at Racine Correctional Institution.

The girl recalled how her mom told her dad she thought she was pregnant, and how he, in turn, told her stepgrandmother.

"And grandma took me to a Perkins (restaurant) to talk about the entire situation," she testified, adding that her step-grandmother recorded their conversation and then took her to the hospital.

That's where she learned she wasn't pregnant, she said.

And when she learned that, the girl said, she was disappointed - admitting on the witness stand Tuesday



\*\*\*FILE PHOTO\*\*\*Aaron Pope, a corrections officer accused of sexually assaulting a teenage girl, appears in Racine County Circuit Court for his preliminary hearing, Wednesday, Oct. 21, 2009. (AP Photo/Journal Times, Mark Hertzberg)

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#### Alleged victim would lie, former friend testifies



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that she wanted to have a baby with Pope, who is approximately 14 years her senior. She said she started knitting a baby blanket — but wouldn't say for whom — before she thought she was pregnant.

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ts Get The girl 1988 18, Coas the Ohst prosestition with easiet 5 estites on Tuesday.

She often responded to prosecution and defense questions in a flippant manner — at times rolling her eyes, chuckling and failing to answer a question asked of her multiple times. Sometimes swiveling in her chair so her back was to the jury, the teen would balk at the reading aloud of love letters she purportedly wrote to Pope, and of reading even one page from a transcript of her October 2009 interview with a Racine County Child Advocacy Center interviewer — "'cause I don't like reading."

"This is why I shred my papers," the teen burst out on the witness stand. "People go garbage-picking. My father and my stepmother. All of this stuff is crumpled up (in the trash) for a reason. I didn't want nothing to happen to him (Pope)."

Racine County Assistant District Attorney Jennifer Tanck-Adams told jurors that the girl had sex with Pope on the night of her father's 40th birthday party.

The Journal Times is not naming the alleged victim because of the nature of the charges.

Pope is charged with repeated sexual assault of a child, child enticement and exposing a child to harmful materials, the latter charge stemming from Pope allegedly showing the girl pornography. The girl testified Tuesday that Pope showed her the porn after she asked him how to perform oral sex on a man.

The defense won't be allowed to tell jurors about Pope having MRSA on his genitals, because he was diagnosed with the flesh-eating bacteria after the time frame he allegedly had sexual contact with the teen.

The girl told investigators in October 2009 that she and Pope had been having a sexual relationship between the winter of 2008 and the fall of 2009, according to his criminal complaint.

She said she and Pope engaged in oral sex numerous times during that span, but had sexual intercourse one time, on July 21, 2009, according to his criminal complaint and the girl's testimony on Tuesday.

The trial is set to resume this morning before Circuit Judge Charles Constantine. Tanck-Adams and defense attorney Sydne French said the trial could conclude on Thursday or Friday.

**Tags** Racine, Aaron L. Pope, Sexual Assault Of A Child, Charles Constantine, Racine County Child Advocacy Center, Sydne French, Jennifer Tanck-adams

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