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Hardin Co. teacher accused of sex abuse worked as special deputy, pastor

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By Bennett Haeberle - [bio](#) | [email](#)

ELIZABETHTOWN, Ky. (WDRB) - Fired from his job as a Hardin County teacher a day after his arrest on a sex abuse charge, WDRB News has learned Edwin Bonet-Ruiz has been let go from two other posts: his role as a Spanish pastor at a Radcliff church and as a special deputy working for the Hardin County Sheriff's Department.

Hardin County Sheriff Charlie Williams told WDRB News that Bonet-Ruiz has worked for the sheriff's department for nine years as a special deputy - working traffic duties at places like the county fairgrounds and acting as a Spanish translator for the sheriff's department and other area police departments.

Williams says Bonet-Ruiz, 54, did not have arrest power, but was working in an unpaid position. Williams added that those duties were revoked after Bonet-Ruiz's arrest on Monday.

Edwin Bonet-Ruiz is accused of hugging and kissing a 14-year old student in his classroom last week at Central Hardin High School. After the girl told a school resource officer of the incident, investigations were launched by both the school district and the Elizabethtown Police Department.

Sgt. Tim Cleary with Elizabethtown Police said Bonet-Ruiz admitted to the act. Cleary also said the teacher created a fake Facebook account to contact the 14-year old girl.

A not guilty plea was entered on his behalf during a court appearance Tuesday, authorities said. Bonet-Ruiz bonded out of jail, according to county corrections officials.

A WDRB reporter saw a man walk into a home at the address listed on Bonet-Ruiz's arrest report Wednesday, but no one answered the door. A day earlier, Bonet-Ruiz denied a request for a jail interview.

"I still respect the man, I don't respect the decision he's accused of. We're appalled. We're not even sure... We're fighting every emotion of anger, of hurt, disappointment, all of those things," said Terry Linscott, associate pastor of Abundant Life Church in Radcliff.

During an interview, Linscott said that the charges against Bonet-Ruiz are in stark contrast to the man he's known for 18 years.

"We're just really shocked with the situation, we're very concerned for the girl and her family," Linscott said. "The person I've known for 18 years... this is definitely not Edwin at all."

In light of Bonet-Ruiz's arrest, church officials canceled the Wednesday night service at the church. Instead, church leaders met to formulate a plan of what to tell the congregation of 300 people.

Bonet-Ruiz, a Spanish pastor, was relieved of this duties as a volunteer minister, Linscott said.

"We revoked his credentials immediately once the news came out. He's still a member here, we're not kicking him out. A church is a hospital for the spiritually sick - just like we'd help anybody else."

The 54-year-old Bonet-Ruiz began teaching at Central Hardin High School in 2000.

John Wright, Hardin County Schools spokesman, said Tuesday: "We're obviously surprised when any student or anyone comes forward with a complaint against a faculty or staff member. We're saddened by it. We're

shocked by it."

Bonet charged with first degree sexual abuse and unlawful use of electronic means to induce a minor in sexual or prohibited acts. WDRB News has been told he found out about his firing while in jail.

"I think it's ridiculous to be honest. That's like rule book. That shouldn't happen," said Dylan Wallen, a freshman at Central Hardin High School.

Wallen said that neither students nor parents had been made aware of the situation. Wallen said he had only heard "rumors" that a Spanish teacher was involved in something inappropriate.

As school officials and Elizabethtown police began their separate investigations Monday, Bonet-Ruiz was arrested at the high school and placed on paid leave.

But by Tuesday afternoon, Superintendent Nannette Johnston said: "The investigation is complete and its findings have led to the dismissal of Mr. Bonet Ruiz."

Johnston confirmed that Bonet-Ruiz was notified at the jail that he was fired. Earlier in the day, Bonet-Ruiz made his initial appearance in court where a not guilty plea was entered on his behalf to charges of sexual abuse and unlawful use of electronic means to induce a minor to engage in a sexual or prohibited activities.

When pressed by reporters about why Bonet-Ruiz was fired just a day after being arrested, Johnston said: "Because of the police report, the statements made in the police report, we believe we need to send a strong message in any actions that we take. And we have sent that message."

Cleary adds, "This is an ongoing investigation, but there's nothing leading us to believe that there's any other students that might be impacted by this incident."

A letter will be sent home to parents Wednesday. School officials said parents couldn't have been notified sooner because Bonet-Ruiz wasn't fired until Tuesday.

Below is a copy of the text that will go to parents from the Central Hardin Principal:

We would like to share with you the facts concerning an incident regarding a Central Hardin High School faculty member. Hardin County Schools has terminated the contract of Central Hardin High School teacher Edwin Bonet-Ruiz after an investigation by the district and the Elizabethtown Police Department.

Mr. Bonet-Ruiz, a Spanish teacher at Central Hardin High School, received a letter of termination late Tuesday afternoon.

The Elizabethtown Police Department arrested and charged Mr. Bonet-Ruiz early Monday evening. He received a letter notifying him that he was suspended with pay during the HCS investigation. Hardin County Schools' investigation is complete and its findings led to Mr. Bonet-Ruiz's dismissal. An investigation is still open by the Elizabethtown Police Department.

We maintain that integrity and student safety remain a priority at Central Hardin High School. Any threat to either of these will be taken very seriously.

If you have questions, please contact me at 270-737-6800.

Respectfully,

Tim Isaacs

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