



Vt paraeducator denies sending nude photos to child

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By Tyler Dumont [CONNECT](#)

ST. ALBANS, Vt. - "Sometimes you just can't fathom *where* people are coming from," said Winton Goodrich, superintendent of the Franklin County supervisory union.

Police say a Highgate Elementary School paraeducator sent nude photos of herself to a 10-year-old boy earlier this month.

"It's a really disturbing affidavit to read," Franklin County Prosecutor Jim Hughes said.

Josie Spears, 33, of Highgate, is now facing a felony charge of lewd and lascivious conduct. It comes after the young boy's mother allegedly found messages and explicit photos he received from Spears on his Instagram account.

"It's an attempt, it looks like, to have a peer-to-peer relationship and, again, that's disturbing," Hughes said.

The prosecutor told WCAX News *he's* never seen a case like this in three decades— an accused child predator who targeted a boy who attends Highgate Elementary, the school where she works.

Court documents show Spears also allegedly told the fourth-grader she loved him, planned to get him a gift for Valentine's Day and would hug him inside the school he attends and where she works. She's now on paid leave from the school.

"She will not be in the school until we complete the investigation and she may [not be](#) as well alter that," Goodrich said.

Spears allegedly once told the victim he should have come over while her boyfriend was out plowing for the night.

"This is an individual that needs an opportunity to tell her side of the case and we look forward to that opportunity," defense lawyer Jessica Burke said.

Police allege she did, saying Spears asked the boy to erase messages she sent him. Her phone has been seized and screenshots of her conversation with the boy are becoming evidence at court.

Spears already had an attorney before she was arrested Monday night. Prosecutors say she could face additional charges. She pleaded not *guilty* at her arraignment Tuesday morning and was *released* on a \$5,000 appearance bond.

RiftliedStory:

Forme: Highgate woman sent nude photos to child

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February 27, 2017

Press Release/Vermont State Police-NUSI/Lewd& Lascivious Conduct with a Child/Case# 17A200917

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STATE OF VERMONT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

VERMONT STATE POLICE

PRESS RELEASE

CASE#:17A200917

RANK/TROOPER FULL NAME: Det/Tpr Richard

Stepien STATION: VSP-St. Albans-NUSI

CONTACT#:(802)527-4002

DATE/TIME:02-21-2017

LOCATION: Highgate

VIOLATION: Lewd & Lascivious Conduct with a Child

ACCUSED: Josie Spears

AGE: 33

CITY, STATE OF RESIDENCE: Highgate, VT

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VICTIM: (The Vermont State Police does not release the names of victims of sexual assault or domestic violence.)

SUMMARY OF INCIDENT:

On 02-21-2017 the Vermont State Police and the Northwest Unit for Special Investigations were notified and investigated a sex offense in Highgate, VT.

Through the course of the investigation, it was determined that 33 year-old Josie Spears engaged in inappropriate conversations with a young juvenile

victim. The conversations included nude photos of Spears breasts and genitalia area, which were sent to the young male through social media. It should be noted that the investigation is still ongoing.

On 02-27-2017 the Vermont State Police arrested Spears at her sister's residence in Highgate, VT. Spears was transported back to the VSP-St. Albans Barracks in

St. Albans, VT for processing. Spear was fingerprinted and photographed. The Honorable Judge Rainyille released Spears with a \$5,000.00 USD Appearance Bond

and with conditions of release. Spears was cited into the Franklin Superior Court, Criminal Division, for 02-28-2017 at 1100 hours.

COURT ACTION: Y

COURT DATE: 02-28-2017 @ 1100

hours COURT: Franklin

BAIL: \$5,000.00 USD Appearance

Bond MUG SHOT: YES, IMAGE

PBT: NOT APPLICABLE

*Please note: court date and time are subject to change at the discretion of the court. Please call the criminal court clerk to confirm arraignment time.

From: Stepien, Richard

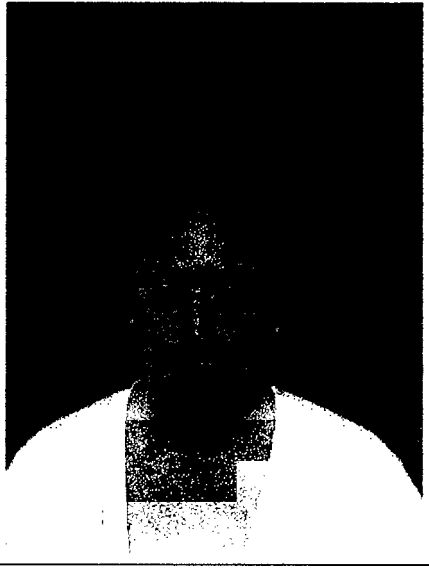
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