

May 1, 2000

Your Honor:

I am writing this letter to hopefully influence your decision on the sentencing of Mr. Carl Leede.

My daughter [redacted] is one of the girls that Mr. Leede "inappropriately touched". I must agree that to place a young girl in a headlock and rub your hands over their developing chest should at least be acknowledged as "inappropriate".

I was informed of the reasoning behind the plea bargain offered to Mr. Leede. I was pleased that he will be removed from a position where he has access to further victims but also gets paid for it. However, I do not believe that his punishment will even begin to be a remedy for the damage he inflicted on so many young girls.

I would like to tell you about my daughter, [redacted] the actual incident where she unfortunately came in contact with Mr. Leede and the eventual consequences of his actions.

[redacted] was in the fourth grade when she came in contact with Mr. Leede. She wasn't even in his class. But, because she excelled in reading she was rewarded the privilege of participating in Mr. Leede's advanced reading group. We were very proud of her. Unfortunately this privilege turned out to be a detriment. It started when [redacted] approached Mr. Leede to ask a question. He proceeded to place [redacted] in a headlock and fondle her chest while answering the question. Although [redacted] was only [redacted] years old, she had already started developing. (not that that should make any difference). After that Mr. Leede continued to take many opportunities to attack my daughter. Of course, this made her very uncomfortable, but as a child, and although she had always been taught that she should not allow anyone to touch her inappropriately, she felt confused. At first she tried to ignore him. After all he was a figure of authority, a well liked teacher, and besides he did this in front of other students. Maybe she felt that she was misinterpreting this unsolicited affection. When it came to the point that [redacted] felt like she couldn't put up with another assault she finally told her father and me about it.

We immediately contacted the principle, Mr. Ed Young. We believed that this incident would be handled correctly. Mr. Young assured me that he would address the issue the next day. Unfortunately, for [redacted], the way he chose to address it was also was inappropriate. He called [redacted] into his office where he and Mr. Leede were waiting. I was never asked if I consented to this kind of confrontation. Nor was there any other adult in the room. [redacted] said that Mr. Leede apologized for touching her. That she just didn't understand that he was a "touchy-feely" sort of guy. But he wouldn't do it again. (That was definitely true because I informed Mr. Young and Mr. Leede that he was not to come near [redacted] for any reason and [redacted] was not to attend his reading class again.)

I was notified after the fact of this meeting. Mr. Leede called and apologized to me also. I waited for [redacted] to come home to see how she felt about the situation. She seemed satisfied at the time with the outcome. Now I know that I should have fought harder, yelled louder, etc. But, part of me did not want my daughter to be dragged through a public scandal over this most personal kind of attack. I asked [redacted] if she wanted me to pursue this further and she said no. I know now that my mistake in this matter has caused my daughter a great deal of pain and she also learned at an early age, (unfortunately) that mom and dad can't always protect you. I feel a great sense of loss of this.

[redacted] is now fourteen years old. I feel that we didn't begin to really see the damage done to her until last year when she entered junior high. What is an already stressful transition for any child became a real nightmare for [redacted] and our whole family.

[redacted] developed a very angry disposition. Within the first two weeks of school she kicked a boy in the hand and broke his hand. She chose to associate with a whole new group of kids that projected a very angry anti-social attitude. Her choices in music changed from "The Back Street Boys" to Korn & Marilyn Manson. Her choice of clothing also changed. Now instead of "Old Navy" and "Gap" [redacted] was choosing only black clothes and often her choices were far to revealing. Her poetry and writing focused on death, & suicide. She became increasingly defiant at home, and eventually started to physically attack me, her father, and younger brother. I believe that [redacted] didn't know how to react to her new found independence and the new attention she received from boys. She one time told me when we were arguing about this change that look what being a "good girl" had gotten her and referred to Mr. Leede

Throughout the course of the year as a result of [redacted]'s anger and attacks she was arrested and placed on probation for her attacks at home. She stole things from stores and was caught. She experimented with drugs and, unfortunately, sex. She scratched her wrists repeatedly with a piece of broken glass. There wasn't much that she didn't do but interestingly she would always make sure that we found out about anything she did. At one point she told a counselor with child protective services about Mr. Leede, and said that he had ruined her life. The counselor told us that this was a completely unsolicited remark and asked us about the incident. She also told a police officer about the incident. He said it was too late to do anything about it, but he did report it to the school district. Supposedly it went in Mr. Leede's file. In conversations at home she told us that she was angry that nothing ever happened to him.

Last summer in an effort to regain our daughter, we sent [redacted] on a "coming of age" trip. A sort of "tough love" situation where she had to be really responsible for herself. It was a 3-week wilderness trek. [redacted] talked about Mr. Leede to the counselors with this group as well.

I believe that as a result of her trip and some counseling that she has had, [redacted] is beginning to take control of her actions again. Unfortunately the results of her actions last year have left her with a reputation at school that has been difficult to live down. She is trying very hard to stay on track and out of trouble.

The sad thing is she has lost an innocence so early, and developed a very negative attitude towards most men. I am very concerned as to how [redacted] will handle future relationships with men. Although we are all responsible for our own actions and [redacted] will have to live with the results of hers, Mr. Leede definitely made an impact on how she and many other young girls feel about themselves and the people they come in contact with. Please your Honor, make sure that Mr. Leede is made to be responsible for his actions also.

Thank you.

Sincerely,