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Janis Siegel

LOCAL NEWS

Jail time suspended for Torah Day School child molester

Jordan Murray, King County jail, molestation, sentence, Torah Day School | 1 Comment | Apr 28, 2014

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Janis Siegel JTNews correspondent

Jordan Eareckson Murray, the Torah Day School teacher charged with seven counts of communicating with a minor for immoral purposes in his classroom in May 2013, will not see further jail time. Murray changed his innocent plea to guilty on two of those counts in Feb. 2014, but again declared his innocence on Friday to Judge Laura Gene Middaugh, who rejected that assertion before handing down her sentence.

Saying that TDS was “truly a second home,” Murray read from his pre-sentencing statement while his wife, who remains supportive, watched in the courtroom.

“Although I’m not guilty of the crimes I was charged with,” said Murray, “I understand how the accusation of sexual abuse happens. Jewish communities are very close-knit.... When allegations of this magnitude occur in such an intimate community it puts a tremendous strain on their social environment. I hope and pray that everything that has transpired in the past year will not affect the persons associated with these allegations.”

Middaugh immediately asked if Murray had children.

He said he did — two boys, ages 8 and 6, and a girl, age 2.

“Let me be clear,” said Middaugh, addressing Murray directly. “You are guilty of these crimes. You are guilty of these offenses.”

Timeline of Events

- 5-13-2013: Sheriff returns a warrant for Murray's arrest
- 5-15-2013: Bond is set at \$100,000
- 5-20-2013: Initial arraignment with Judge

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Middaugh then turned to Murray’s legal counsel, Cassandra Stamm.

“I’m concerned that he comes before me today insisting that he’s not guilty,” Middaugh said. “He comes before me as a guilty person.”

Murray has no prior criminal record and taught 1st and 2nd grade at TDS from 2011 until his arrest. The school administration allowed Murray to use the title of rabbi although he is not an ordained rabbi, according to information gathered by the Seattle Police Department.

Middaugh sentenced Murray to 36 months of electronic GPS-monitored home supervision and probation, a sexual deviancy evaluation, and a court order to have no unsupervised contact with minor children, including his own, who he has been living with this past year, until a court determines that he is not a threat to their safety after it evaluates whether Murray harbors any sexual deviancy.

“While I may disagree with the imposition of a no-contact order pertaining to Mr. Murray’s own children,” Stamm told The Jewish Sound, “I can understand and appreciate the cautiousness underlying this order temporarily prohibiting such contact.”

Murray must also register as a sex offender for 10 years.

Middaugh suspended the 364-day consecutive sentences on each of the two counts, saying she didn’t think “it was necessary,” crediting Murray for time already served.

“Overall, I am happy with the sentence imposed by Judge Middaugh,” Stamm said, “which was both fair and reasonable under the circumstances. Judge Middaugh’s approach was careful and care should certainly be taken when the safety of children is at issue.”

Murray was released on \$100,000 bail soon after being arrested in 2013 and plans to move out of state to Minnesota with his wife and children.

The Washington Department of Corrections will oversee Murray’s probation, employment, and living arrangements initially, according to Stamm, and Minnesota will take over at a mutually agreeable time.

Hugh Barber, a King County senior deputy prosecutor in the Special Assault Unit, told The Jewish Sound that he, too, felt Middaugh’s decision was thoughtful, noting that Middaugh even agreed to shorten the probation if Murray was compliant with all of the terms of his sentence.

“I’m happy with it, but it’s unfortunate that he didn’t take this opportunity to take some responsibility,” said Barber. “I learned a lot about the Orthodox community. This had a significant impact on that small community and I hope that they will heal.”

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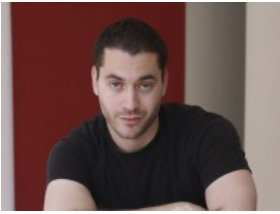
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ONE COMMENT



Pinky from Passaic

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MAY 11, 2014 @ 21:14:30

Disgusting. Truly disgusting. An immoral degenerate prowling youngsters and he gets off scott free.

Now he is off to Minnesota. And, of course, no one will notify the Jewish schools there of his presence because it will be considered "loshon hara".

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